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Designing Mediational Tools for Fostering Argumentation Skills in EFL University Students in Thailand

By
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Abstract

The Thai government prescribes the development of students' critical thinking in the domain of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This research focuses on designing mediational tools to foster argumentation skills in Thai students undertaking an EFL programme at a Thai university, and developing principles underpinned by pedagogical techniques that explicitly foster critical thinking. Working with sociocultural theory, and in particular, drawing on Vygotksy's concepts of intermental and intramental processes, the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding and mediation, this research considered dialogic argumentation as a potential pedagogic tool to support the development of critical thinking. Using design-based research (DBR), the debate and scaffolding tasks were developed, tested and refined through three cyclic iterations. Forty-two, third-year Thai students who were enrolled in an EFL programme at a Thai university voluntarily participated in this research. The analysis of the observational, interview and questionnaire data finds that the participants' engagement and performance in debate was influenced by their emotional states, prior knowledge and cognitive abilities. The classroom practices the participants had experienced at schools and the university, such as their limited exposure to English oral language production and the power-relations between teachers, students and amongst peers, shaped their capacity to participate in verbal argumentation. The thesis derives seven principles to inform teaching argumentation skills in a Thai context, including (1) modifying Western-style debate format; (2) harnessing emotions invoked during debate; (3) creating a positive classroom atmosphere; (4) providing scaffolding exercises; (5) strengthening familiarity between interlocutors; (6) making argumentation entertaining; and (7) scaffolding in rhetoric argumentation. The thesis goes on to argue that teachers should consider the Western origins of debate and accommodate cultural differences to generate a better understanding about what argumentation forms will be appropriate for Thai EFL students.

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Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: Tanyapon Phongphio DATE: 24 September 2020

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CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DBR	Design-based research
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
FLL	Foreign Language Learning
IRF	Initiation-response-feedback
L1	First language/ Mother tongue
L2	Second language
RQ	Research question
SCT	Sociocultural theory
SLA	Second language acquisition
TAP	Toulmin's argument pattern
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
ZPD	Zone of proximal development

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Teaching critical thinking in higher education in Thailand

> Our past is always constructed in our present. The events we have lived many years ago come to our memories with a significance that partly fits our lives today. (Schwarz and Baker, 2017, p.1)

There is an entrenched problem at the heart of the Thai educational system. The most recent Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) ranking reports conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) raised questions about the efficiency of teaching and learning approaches implemented in Thailand. The results of the 2015 OECD report evaluating 15-year-old students' abilities in collaborative problem-solving[1] showed that with a mean score of 436 points Thai students were ranked 44 out of 52 participating countries worldwide (OECD, 2017). Similarly, UNESCO's 2018 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report on Thailand's education system highlighted the lack of progress in significantly empowering students with transferable knowledge and skills necessary for improving their circumstances and preparing them for the global world.

The Thai government has declared its commitment to improve the quality and standard of education in order to increase the competitiveness of the country. Accordingly, the National Qualifications Framework (Thailand NQF) has prescribed that students at higher education level need to be capable of critical thinking (Office of the Education Council, 2017). It is thought that providing students with the tools to think and make reasoned judgements will help to develop responsible citizens for future society. There is, in effect, an obvious and overt attempt to connect education with citizenship and this citizenship is imbued with an aspirational sense of critical and higher thinking. Prior to this NQF, the critical thinking requirements had been elaborated in the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (TQF: HEd). That document indicates that the students are expected to be able to:

[1] Collaborative problem-solving is concerned with the students' ability to cooperate with one another by sharing their understanding and the effort required to come to a solution and pooling their knowledge, skills and efforts to reach that solution.

> Analyse situations and apply conceptual understanding of principles and theories in critical thinking and creative problem solving when faced with unanticipated new situations. (Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2006, p. 3)

Unfortunately, the TQF: HEd provides limited clarification around what critical thinking and creative problem-solving actually mean. The same document also suggested some learning conditions to be considered in implementing the framework.

> To improve creative thinking[2] and problem solving[3] capacity students should be assisted to reflect on their own thinking processes as they tackle new and challenging tasks and to improve the management of their own thought strategies as they deal with different types of issues. (Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2006, p. 10)

There are a number of problems with the TQF: HEd document. In particular, it seems to conflate critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving. The guidance for improving creative thinking and problem solving appears to define outcomes more closely associated with critical thinking processes. In addition, while the Thai government prescribes the development of students' critical thinking capacities, without a coherent explanation and guidance there is little by way of an applied methodology for teaching critical thinking within subjects. The vague abstractions stated in the national curriculum have highlighted the importance of understanding the foundations of critical thinking and determining what we mean by it and what constitutes critical thinking skills. Importantly, a better understanding of these skills has implications for designing instructional activities for fostering critical thinking in the English oral communication classrooms in higher education. Ennis (1987) and Kuhn (1999) advocate that a clear definition of critical thinking and its elements are vital for the teaching and learning of the subject.

Researchers' and theorists' views of what constitutes critical thinking varies across differing fields. The term 'critical' is derived from the ancient Greek word 'kritikos',

[2] Creative thinking is concerned with viewing problems from multiple perspectives and come up with original solutions to complex problems (Boss, 2015).

[3] Problem-solving involves processing information, identifying problems, exploring strategies, acting on ideas and evaluating the effects (Bransford, Sherwood and Sturdevant, 1987). For psychologists, problem-solving refers to generalised strategies and specific procedures within science and mathematics (Quellmalz, 1987).

meaning a capacity to judge, discern or decide (McGregor, 2007; Butterworth and Thwaites, 2013). The term 'thinking' is limited in the literature to purposeful mental activity in which a person takes a conscious effort, rather than any ideas that may occur in a person's mind (Ruggiero, 1988; Butterworth and Thwaites, 2013). Critical thinking in philosophy centres around logical thinking with an application to the analysis of arguments. In particular, philosophers tend to concentrate on the features and qualities of what are termed the 'products' of critical thinking (Quellmalz, 1987). In another vein, psychologists tend to interpret critical thinking based on cognitive skills and disposition. Significantly, the concept in education is mainly associated with creating the conditions for training and learning critical thinking (e.g. skills for recognising, constructing and evaluating arguments, skills for analysing, synthesising and evaluating materials and skills associated with the ability to explain, consider and reflect).

These definitions of have been developed and extended by philosophers and thinkers throughout millennia, beginning with the field of the human mind disciplined by reasoning and furthering into the sphere of human social life (Paul, Elder and Bartell, 1997). Nevertheless, there is a consistent theme in that the majority of definitions highlight the importance of evaluating ideas, garnering relevant information and evaluating evidence before making judgements. For example, Dewey (1910), who contributed to the emergence of modern critical thinking in the 20th Century, marked the distinction between 'reflective thinking' and 'ordinary thinking' and defined the former as:

> Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends. (Dewey, 1910, p. 6)

Extending Dewey's conception of critical thinking into the classroom, students should be provided with opportunities for reflective thinking during instruction. It is therefore vital for teachers to have knowledge about reflective thinking and the strategies to engage students in a reflection process.

The features of critical thinking have also been represented in a taxonomic manner. Scriven and Paul presented a concept of critical thinking at the 8th Annual International Conference on Critical Thinking and Education Reform in 1987. They stated:

> Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of activity and skilfully conceptualising, applying, analysing, synthesising, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action… (The Foundation for Critical Thinking, no date).

In meetings between 1988 and 1989, a Delphi panel[4], which consisted of forty-six experts in this field, arrived at a consensus around the description of critical thinking (Facione, 1990) Table 1-1 presents the consensus list of core elements and sub-skills provided in the Delphi report.

Table 1-1 List of skills and sub-skills of critical thinking
Source: (Facione, 1990)

Skills	Sub-Skills
1. Interpretation	- Categorisation - Decoding Significance - Clarifying Meaning
2. Analysis	- Examining Ideas - Identifying Arguments - Analysing Arguments
3. Evaluation	- Assessing Claims - Assessing Arguments
4. Inference	- Querying Evidence# - Conjecturing Alternatives - Drawing Conclusions
5. Explanation	- Stating Results - Justifying Procedures - Presenting Arguments
6. Self-Regulation	- Self-Examination - Self-Correction

Several scholars (e.g. Ennis, 1987; Fisher, 1990; Halpern, 2007) advocate that critical thinking includes all or most of the practical 'higher order cognitive skills' which are associated with the top three levels (analysis, synthesis and evaluation) of Bloom's

[4] The Delphi method is a predictive process based on multiple rounds of questionnaires sent to a panel of experts in the field.

taxonomy[5] (Bloom, 1956). A number of scholars (e.g Kuhn, 2005; Freeley and Steinberg, 2009; Halpern, 2014; Andrews, 2015) contended that there is a connection between critical thinking and argumentation because the former is often referred to as a higher order cognitive thinking which requires judgement, reasoning and skills in analysing, synthesising and evaluating evidence.

Regardless of the various definitions of the term, the need to develop students' critical thinking capacities has been extensively addressed in educational policies across the world. For example, critical thinking has been prescribed in the Framework for 21st Century Learning as one of the key skills in the learning and innovation skill set (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011). The Framework defines critical thinking as the ability to use reason effectively and make judgements. The latter is concerned with drawing conclusions based on the optimal analysis and evaluation of arguments, evidence, claims and beliefs. In addition, it involves critically reflecting on learning experiences and processes. It appears that the characterisation of critical thinking in the Framework may have its root in Dewey's definition.

1.1.1 **Critical thinking in English language teaching**

The drive to develop critical thinking is pervasive and visible in several domains, including the English Language Teaching (ELT) setting. English, as a global lingua franca, drives significant growth in the worldwide economy and is the primary conduit for the development of knowledge and ideas in the international sphere (The Bristish Council, 2013). By the year 2020 English is predicted to be spoken at a useful level or learned for use by approximately two billion people worldwide (Crystal, 2012; The Bristish Council, 2013). The impact of globalisation has made English the language of opportunity and a significant means of well-paid employment. In this regard, the Thai curriculum 'The Basic Education Core Curriculum, A.D. 2008' (Ministry of Education, 2008) prescribes, along with the development of critical thinking skills, equipping students with communicative proficiency in English. Indeed, efforts to cultivate critical thinking are evident, in particular, in pedagogical approaches such as Communicative

[5] The term 'higher order cognitive skills' rhymes with Vygotsky's description of 'higher mental functions' discussed in Section 1.8.

Language Teaching (CLT). The aim of ELT is not only to assist learners to develop the knowledge to master communication skills necessary for thriving in today's workplace in the global economy, but also to prepare them to become a thinker and a communicator in the modern world. That is, learners should be able to actively and collaboratively participate as global citizens and use English to articulate their thoughts about what is going on around them. Indeed, it has been posited that the emergence of 21st century skills are closely associated with the ability to 'concede to stronger arguments and evidence' (Editorial, 2016, p. 267).

Much of the research in thinking skills and critical thinking in second language (L2) learning concentrates on fostering the capacity through reading and writing (Alnofaie, 2013; Li, 2016a). Indeed, there is substantive evidence that critical thinking directed teaching instruction improves English speaking and listening skills for non-native speakers (Yang and Gamble, 2013). In addition, it is well established that cognition and higher order thinking and language development are closely linked (Dewey, Clifford and Cox, 2014). Other studies (e.g. Brown, 2009; Brown, Bown and Egget, 2014) have confirmed that the extended immersion-type programme which incorporates critical thinking-related tasks, specifically, argumentation and debate, helps to promote both oral and written proficiency in L2. In response to the demand for cultivating communication skills and critical thinking, the question is what approaches in ELT can effectively engage English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students to help develop both skills.

However, my personal and professional experience is that the teaching of critical thinking to Thai EFL students is a significant challenge. The curriculum does not provide practitioners in the Thai educational environment with any template or guidance about how thinking capacities should be incorporated into the foreign language domain. Despite its announcement of a new pedagogical approach to ELT, the Thai government failed to devise appropriate instructional strategies for teachers (Richmond, 2007). Essentially, teachers received top-down instructions to take full responsibility for the implementation of this educational reform.

A more nuanced understanding of critical thinking in foreign language instruction is offered by Li (2016a), who details the complexities around the attempts to define and teach the subject. Li claims that while teaching thinking is widely recognised as essential for producing creative and reflective global citizens, many stakeholders, including practitioners, describe a limited and fragmented knowledge about how critical thinking is conceptualised and implemented in classrooms. Despite the universities' objectives, finding a way to engage students in critical thinking in an EFL classroom in Thailand would be challenging for the teachers. Indeed, despite the availability of range of programmes that have been in use within formal educational settings in USA and European countries[6], it was very challenging for me, as a teacher, to make the subject content and classroom activities that allowed the students to become more oriented in critical thinking. In retrospect, this was also partially due to my own limited knowledge in this space. Despite my best intention, the tenets, concepts and interpretations of critical thinking, that are primarily of Western origin, were alien to my historical, social and cultural contexts. Sections 1.2 to 1.7 elucidate how these contexts have shaped my own reasoning and perspective on thinking skills and how to teach critical thinking in an EFL classroom at a university. When I started my research study, I had reasonable expectations due to my previous experiences and some literature review evidence, that the use of argumentation could be utilised in science education to develop students' thinking and reasoning capacities. I was optimistic and confident about transposing the Western-style argumentative approach to foster the critical thinking capacities of Thai students in an English oral communication classroom. However, over the course of my research the findings made me realise that this Western model of argumentation was very challenging for many Thai students in the local context. In the second trial, I noticed that many pilot participants were not able to perform well, particularly when defending their own arguments and challenging the opposite speaker's arguments. In my initial reflection, I assumed that these participants' difficulties were due to an insufficient guidance

[6] For example, the cognitive acceleration (CA) approach, Activating Children's Thinking (ACTs), Thinking Together, Thinking Through… (TT) series, STS/FIE/TTTT, P4C, and De Bono's thinking hats (McGregor, 2007).

provided in the scaffolding tasks. However, despite the refinement of the scaffolding techniques, in the third trial, I also observed a similar pattern. This was the point where I began to reflect on whether the debate format, and in particular the innate oppositional nature of the activity, would be appropriate in a Thai classroom. I also started to observe the substantive cultural differences between Thai and Western practices, especially regarding their respective approaches towards argumentation. These reflections suggested that there would be significant challenges in fostering critical thinking using the Western-style format of argumentation in the EFL context at a Thai university.

1.2 **Context of my family**

I was born into a middle-class family in which my father was the main income earner and breadwinner. He worked for the postal service after graduating from Thailand Postal School, an institute dedicated to training postmen. My mother graduated from college and had worked as an employee in the Chiang Mai Provincial Education Office for a short period before quitting her job to assist my grandmother in running a grocery shop. However, once she married, she became a full-time housewife. As the wage earner and patriarch of the family, my father held, and continues to hold, the power in making decisions on any important matter. Traditionally, whenever my mother and I suggested anything, we would need his approval and consent. According to an old Thai saying, "Men are the front legs of an elephant and women are the hind legs", my mother would always be humble in front of my father and would never argue with him. In addition, a strict hierarchy exists also between the parents and their children in Thai culture. According to Buddhist doctrine, your parents are regarded as 'house gods' and children are supposed to obey and not argue with parents. The open discussion of opinions, or any argumentative dialogue, was an extremely rare occurrence within our household when I was growing up.

1.3 **Climate and practices of my school**

I went to a primary and a secondary school which has a reputation for training young girls to become courteous and traditional Thai women. Apart from academic matters, the school emphasised the teaching of manners to pupils, including a polite decorum,

good dress and hygiene habits, modesty and respect for teachers and elders. In particular, pupils were taught to be humble in front of teachers and follow their instructions, because they are also regarded as the second parents. Pupils are expected to show gratitude to teachers because they are the persons who hold and transfer subject knowledge. To show respects to teachers, one should follow their instructions rather than doing anything which challenges or causes a conflict with teachers. When I was a pupil, I treated what teachers said as something that was innately correct. The classroom practices that I experienced were very passive and lacked any vibrancy. Most teachers spent their lessons talking at or dictating to pupils, who obligingly took notes. There was no instructive dialogue between the teachers and pupils.

It is important to emphasise that Buddhism is associated with ethical reasoning and understanding. Developing 'Panya', or wisdom, a Buddhist trait associated with logical thinking and reasoning, is a fundamental aspiration for many citizens in Thai society. Despite this, it is undeniable that learning by rote and memorisation is emphasised in the educational environment in Thailand, rather than thinking and reflecting with reasoning. Buddhism takes into consideration a trust and belief in the intellectual potential of human beings and aims to provide people with an equal opportunity to develop their capacities (ปัญญาภา, 2014). Intellectual potential or wisdom in Buddhism is formed at three levels, including (1) wisdom acquired from listening to others; (2) wisdom acquired from logical and reasoned thinking; and (3) wisdom acquired from a direct spiritual experience of Buddhist meditation. Reflecting on my school experience, I was deeply exposed to the first level, at which I was required to listen attentively to teachers transferring their knowledge of subjects. However, the teaching practices that I experienced in the EFL classrooms at schools did not provide sufficient exposure to thinking, reasoning and the communication of my thoughts. This is primarily because teaching English grammar and structure was the focus of the classroom activities. The instructional methods lacked dynamism and did not allow me to be an active learner. Rather, I was a passive recipient of information. I questioned why the teaching practices in the EFL classrooms that I experienced over twenty years at schools failed to develop my communicative skills, especially conversational

English, to meet the intermediate level that I was required to reach. This prompted a keen interest in researching this topic in greater depth and encouraged me to pursue my doctoral studies at the University of Bristol, culminating in the production of this thesis.

1.4 Being a Thai woman in a Buddhism culture

Gender inequality is a structural problem and a significant challenge within Thai society[7]. As a Thai woman, I routinely face discrimination from Buddhist institutions and belief systems. Buddhism has long been an integral part of Thai culture and has been credited as a significant source of the Thai worldview (Mulder, 2000; Sattayanurak, 2002, 2005). According to the Survey of Social and Cultural Conditions 2011 (National Statistical Office, 2011), approximately 95% of the population in Thailand are Buddhists. However, Thailand is a country that is located at the nexus between the customs and beliefs of Buddhism, Brahmanism and Hinduism. It has been postulated that belief systems that were likely adapted from other religious traditions contribute to this gender inequality as the Buddha's original teaching is not especially discriminatory towards women. In particular, Hinduism and Brahmanism in India before and during the Buddha era relied on patriarchal structures. It has been suggested that it is the adoption of certain prejudices into Buddhist doctrines in Thailand that provide a normative basis for a male-dominant society in which a woman's status is secondary to that of a man (Xu, Kerley and Sirisunyaluck, 2011). For example, ordination, as a monk, even for just a short period of time, is the most favourable act that a woman could do to express their gratitude for their parents. However, Thailand's male clergy has refused to allow the ordination of women as female monks. Indeed, according to traditional belief, being born a woman is an unfortunate birth due to a negative karma in a previous life. It is thought that making good deeds in the current life will result in being born a man in the next life. I am therefore required to be a good daughter to my parents, respect my teachers and respect elder people. In short, this includes obeying and not arguing with them. Gross

[7] According to the 2020 Global Gender Gap Index, Thailand ranked 75th out of 153 countries (World Economic Forum, 2019, p. 9).

(2014) states that Buddhists agree with the convention that a woman needs to be obedient to her father, her husband or even her son. Clearly, these customs make me feel less valued as a woman in Thai society and there can be no doubt that men have a more privileged role in the traditional Thai society and this is reflected in family structures and religious institutions (Vichit-Vadakan, 1994; Xu, Kerley and Sirisunyaluck, 2011).

1.5 **Mythology and traditional beliefs held by Thai people**

Another important factor that has contributed to my worldview is that I grew up in an environment where there is no perceived contradiction between peculiar mythological and superstitious beliefs and institutional religious devotion to Buddhism, Brahmin and Hinduism. Indeed, there is no doubt that some of the beliefs that Thai people hold would be considered strange and bizarre from a Western culture viewpoint. Although I am relatively well-educated, I am aware that occasionally I still struggle to view certain matters or events with objective and reasoned eyes. A phrase in Thai states that "If you don't believe it, don't disrespect it". Although I may view a certain incident in a more rational way, I would be careful not to argue or refute another person's interpretation and understanding of the incident based on their superstitious beliefs.

There have been numerous occasions where Thai people interpreted the causes of certain incidents by relating them to a bad karma in a past life. For example, on the 23rd of June 2018 twelve boys aged between 11 and 16 and their assistant coach went missing at the Tham Luang Nang Non cave on the border between Thailand and Myanmar. A couple of weeks later, between the 8th and 10th of July the boys were rescued. However, what is probably not well known is that there is a legend associated with that cave and the incident was perceived in Thailand through the lens of that legend. The name of the cave literally means "the cave of the reclining lady" and it was named after a princess who committed suicide after the murder of her lover. According to Thai mythology her body took the form of the mountains, and her genitals were represented by the shape of the cave. It may be difficult to comprehend, but the perception of this incident in Thai society was tinged with a thinking about bad karma in a past life and a superstitious belief with regard to the guardian spirits of the

cave. In this regard, it is interesting to note that a substantive segment of Thai society would deem the rescue mission successful not only because of the technical knowledge and expertise of the dive team, but also due to certain religious rituals carried out at the cave. I must acknowledge that I too can readily, and all too easily relate to this interpretation of the incident.

1.6 **Freedom of expression in Thailand**

Along with rational and objective thought, it is commonly acknowledged that an environment where freedom of expression is fostered is imperative for the development of critical thinking. There are, however, substantive issues with Thailand's democratic system, including restrictions on freedom of speech. In May 2014, the military established the junta and an associated organisation calling themselves the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) seized control of the country's administration. During the five years under their power, Thai citizens have been living with restrictions on their rights and freedoms of speech. People who have engaged in demonstrations or expressed opinions against the NCPO have been subjected to intimidation, detention and criminal prosecution. Peaceful protests instigated by activists, academics and students have taken place in Bangkok and other provinces. A number of anti-coup protesters have been apprehended, summoned by military court and detained without charges. Elections were held in March 2019, however many foreign observers questioned the validity of the election process. Nevertheless, in May 2019 after the elections, the military coup re-instigated the new constitution which had been approved in 2016. Interestingly, there is actually a provision in the constitution that includes academic freedom as a subsection of the freedom of expression clause[8]. The current government is essentially run by the same generals and representatives of the military coup and they use a wide range of legal methods to stifle voices of dissent. Many citizens would argue that their freedom of

[8] The new constitution states:

> Academic freedom shall be protected. However, the exercise of such freedom shall not be contrary to the duties of the Thai people or good morals, and shall respect and not obstruct the different views of another person. (Office of the Council of State, 2017, p.11)

expression in the public sphere is restricted despite being protected by the new constitution. It could be argued that these hierarchical and patriarchal structures have an impact on the Thai character which could be considered to be unaccustomed with the Western values of liberal democracy.

1.7 My professional context and debating experience

I have worked as a full-time lecturer for the English Department at a Thai university since 2009. The idea of utilising debate in an EFL classroom was developed after having organised debate training workshops for the students and observing various intervarsity debate competitions. Apart from lecturing, I was the Head of Student Affairs and actively involved with organizing extracurricular activities that helped to develop students' skills and broaden their views. This included one successful project which I coordinated with the International Debate Education Association (IDEA) to arrange debate training workshops for undergraduate English majors and others who were interested in debating in English. At the time, I received both positive and negative feedback from the participants. The majority of the students recognised the long-term benefits of the debating activities in providing them with opportunities to develop their critical thinking skills and improve their verbal communicative skills, as well as allowing them to be exposed to a wealth of information on specific issues before integrating this information into the formal argumentation process. However, a number of them felt less than confident and even uncomfortable in the argumentative setting. It appeared that the expectations associated with performing in an argumentative setting and within the time constraints of the workshop could overwhelm and intimidate some of the participants. However, a number of the students acknowledged and appreciated the opportunity to boost their confidence while being involved in the processes of constructive discussion and argumentation. This group of students set up the English Debate Club and formed teams to represent the University in national and international debate competitions, including the EU-Thailand Intervarsity Debate Championship in 2011 and 2012. My observations during the workshops and debate competitions influenced my view about how debate could be utilised as a methodological tool to develop critical thinking and reinforce oral

communication skills in the EFL classroom. I surmised that providing students with a step-by-step scaffolding of how to debate would be effective and yield positive outcomes.

Indeed, my own experiences as a student and a teacher, coupled with Thailand's educational policy and the university's efforts to instil critical thinking incentivised me to initiate my research in this area. These activities also led to certain reflections on my own sociocultural background which had shaped my own thinking and reasoning skills. My family environment, the classroom practices that I experienced in my childhood, and other sociocultural practices in Thailand were unlikely to foster my confidence or my capacity to teach critical thinking. The idea of integrating debate into an EFL classroom to promote critical thinking was generated from my observational experiences in debate workshops and debate competitions. With these circumstances, I became interested and motivated to carry out this research. My efforts for this study have focused on how to devise pedagogical tools and principles for teaching critical thinking in an English oral communication classroom at a Thai university. The rest of this chapter explores the applications of critical thinking in argumentation and the movement towards using debate as an instructional strategy across curricula to foster these skills. Further, it addresses the development of my ideas and the aims of this research and the associated research questions. The final part of this chapter provides the outline of the thesis.

1.8 **Argumentation, debate and critical thinking in educational contexts**

In the introduction to this chapter, I addressed how fostering critical thinking is one of the aims of the Thailand NQF and how Thai universities have been tasked with this objective without much by way of guidance or support. I have also shown how there is a lack of agreement in the literature and policy on what critical thinking is and how it could be developed in an educational context. Fostering critical thinking, which is defined differently from ordinary thinking, would require specific discourse patterns. In the section, I make the case that a crucial approach of how critical thinking can be applied in argumentation is to identify, build and evaluate arguments.

Participating in argumentation, both individually and collectively, presupposes the use of reasoning to support a claim or a counterclaim. Participants also evaluate arguments of their own and those made by others. The process of evaluation is also evoked when participants probe claims or counterclaims and assess the quality of the supporting evidence. In addition, the form of dialogical argumentation can foster critical thinking and improve classroom interactions (Kennedy, 2007; Rapanta and Macagno, 2016). From a sociocultural perspective, argumentation plays its role in teaching and learning as a fundamental tool for the "social constitution of knowledge" (Rapanta and Macagno, 2016). The author explains that 'learner to expert' or 'peer to peer' dialogue can bring the learner's beliefs and background knowledge to light and promote further exchanges. Their prior knowledge is made more explicit through argumentative exchange and further developed into co-constructed knowledge. Bringing Vygotsky's sociocultural theory to bear upon this thread, it is argued that critical dialogue and social interaction provides a scaffold that helps learners to develop so-called 'higher mental functions' (Erduran, Ardac and Yakmaci-Guzel, 2006; Kennedy, 2007). The latter are characterised by the qualities of analysis, synthesis and evaluation – all characteristics associated with advanced levels of cognitive abilities classified in Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, 1956).

In light of this interest, I began to explore the origins and pedagogical applications of debate. Over the last two millennia, the custom of public debate has been paramount to democracy, public policy and consensual politics in Western civilisation. The rational formation of opinions through the formal and equal participation in processes of discursive engagement strengthens the principles of democracy (Lubenow, 2012). The practice of debate is crucial and beneficial for democratic societies as it offers citizens a free and open exchange of ideas in public arenas without fear of reprisal (Tumposky, 2004). Habermas theorised the existence of the domains of the individual (the private sphere) and the state (the political sphere) in which individuals and groups could freely discuss and debate relevant social and political issues (Deane, 2005; Lubenow, 2012). Encouraging public debate is fundamental for freedom of speech in democratic societies (Lipman, 2003) and in this regard, Dewey (1961) argued that the aim of

education is to not only develop individuals' cultured personalities but also to prepare individuals to become citizens of the state.

There has been a growing interest in using debate as an instructional strategy in a variety of disciplines to promote critical thinking capacities, together with the communication of ideas to others (Tumposky, 2004; Snider and Schnurer, 2006; Kennedy, 2007; 2009; Akerman and Neale, 2011). Rybold and Harvey-Smith, (2013) highlight that critical thinking is an essential skill for debate.

> Critical thinking is the process of asking and answering questions as you work to understand how and why you come to the conclusions that you do. This is an essential skill for debate because debaters need to plan what they will say, think through opposing positions, and generate arguments that counter other teams' arguments. (Rybold and Harvey-Smith, 2013, p. 67)

Taking into account Vygotsky's notion of higher mental functions as well as critical thinking, it can be argued that debate promotes activities associated with these characteristics because it encourages learners to use logic as an initial tool for analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Tumposky, 2004; Roy and Macchiette, 2005; Snider and Schnurer, 2006; Kennedy, 2007). For example, for analysis, the students must examine the acquired information during the debate from several perspectives and scrutinise the problem and the consequences associated with any action or inaction, as well as provide a possible solution. With regard to synthesis, the students learn how to glean and compile the information and combine several viewpoints to provide an alternative solution. Finally, in the evaluation level, the students must ascertain how to present, defend their arguments as well as how to oppose the opponents' arguments in a credible way and how to make logical judgments about the arguments presented.

In addition to cultivating critical thinking skills, debates require the development of oral communication skills. Indeed, one might contend that discussion, which has been used more frequently than debate in most classrooms, helps to facilitate the development of critical thinking. However, debating goes beyond mere discussion and exemplifies a type of structured argumentation that challenges participants to argue, support, criticise and discuss their views and opinions with their contemporaries. Goodwin's (2003) research indicated that debate offered the participating students an

exposure to counterarguments and different viewpoints which was not always generated in discussion. In addition, the evidence showed that debate demanded the use of logic and reason, while discussion allowed the students to express a range of opinions.

The nexus between critical thinking and argumentative interaction suggested that a suitable debate setting could be a significant tool for both fostering critical thinking skills and improving English speaking skills in an EFL environment. The application of debate involves the use of reasoned arguments to unveil an assessment and the process of inquiry, advocacy and convincing others to agree with or change others' perspectives about a certain issue (Freeley and Steinberg, 2009). There is some interesting research that suggests that debate instruction in the EFL classroom can foster critical thinking (Iman, 2017; Želježič, 2017; Jost, 2018). Želježič (2017) points out that there is no dialogic teaching method which has been currently used to enhance oral communication skills and critical thinking in the context of an EFL classroom. One might surmise that teacher-student dialogue, which frequently occured in EFL classrooms, should facilate the development of these skills. However, the author notes that this dialogue has little to do with practising interactional competence in argumentation. This is because the dialogue, as such, is not intended to enhance the skills in advancing and defending one's own position on a topical issue and responding to another's argument, as commonly occurs in debate. Unlike ordinary dialogue, the argumentative nature of debate itself is built upon a certain level of disagreement, which includes challenging others' arguments and defending one's own propositions. It also imposes an individualistic style of communication (Jost, 2018).

1.9 **Development of ideas and aims of this research**

It is clear from the previous discussion that there is a nexus between critical thinking, argumentation and debate. Critical thinking, which was conceived from Western civilisation, is associated with European thought and appears to be in the nature of reflection within an individual's mind. The process of critical thinking is exemplified and observed through social practices such as argumentative exchanges, which have been informed by culture and traditions.The notion that debate requires skills in

argumentation which is a manifestation of criticality and communicative abilities shaped my conceptual framework and research design to foster argumentation skills in an EFL teaching and learning paradigm.

It should be noted, however, that although the cultivation of critical thinking through oral argumentative exchanges is commonly practiced in educational settings in democratic societies, predominantly in the West. In Thailand, the Buddhist approach to critical thinking is associated with a silent inner dialogue, as outlined in Section 1.3. It was determined that the students would be immersed in the communicative and social practice of the target language and that would be the way to familiarise themselves to the mode of thought and expression predominant amongst Westerners. Kozhevnikova (2014) argued that culture shaped the way communication progresses and successful language use and development is connected with culturally appropriate behaviour. The degree of exposure to the culture of the target language can be important for the success of language teaching and learning. In this connection, this research assumed that an argumentative exchange such as debate is a prospective tool to provide students with an exposure to the mode of Western thoughts and social practice.

With these concepts in my mind, I came to believe that the practice of engaging through argumentation in a debate format could serve as a valuable tool, both in the teaching and the learning environment for developing and fostering the critical thinking of learners in the EFL context. I was optimistic with regard to my research aspirations and this was especially strengthened by the emerging evidence and specific instruction associated with the task for cultivating critical thinking. However, there remained the challenge of how to design instructional tools for the implementation of debate and how to teach argumentation skills in an EFL classroom at a university. In particular, there is a potential for conducting significant research on developing teaching and learning principles for scaffolding argumentation in an English oral communication classroom at a Thai university. The teaching of critical thinking in EFL speaking classrooms in Thailand would appear to be a new pedagogical area. Therefore, this research study aims to develop **the pedagogical techniques that**

explicitly foster argumentation skills that are appropriate for the English oral communication classroom at a university in Thailand.

In particular, this research is intended to generate knowledge and a better understanding of the pedagogical approaches and practices for implementing a debate activity to foster critical thinking alongside English oral communication skills in EFL classrooms. This knowledge would provide pedagogical guidance to English language teachers in higher education in Thailand in further developing activities that align with the curriculum. After the completion of my PhD degree at the University of Bristol, I fully intend to return and teach at CMU. I strongly believe that the results of my research study will contribute significantly to the course syllabus design, opening the way to developing mediational tools to accommodate EFL students. Further, I hope that other courses employing argumentation as a tool may further be implemented in the curriculum. In other words, my aim is not just to contribute to the body of knowledge relating to teaching argumentation in the EFL classroom but to develop my own practice and that of my colleagues.

1.10 **Research questions**

Critical thinking in L2 requires the use of higher-order thinking skills that are predominant in argumentation. This thesis centres on efforts to stimulate argumentation in the English oral communication classroom. The focus was on engaging Thai EFL students in argumentation exchange and an efficient way to bring this about is to provide the students with instruction about argumentative discourse. Designing tools to mediate argumentation in EFL oral communication classrooms is important for the success of teaching and learning because it can yield productive learning outcomes - not only higher-order thinking skills but also communicative competence. This thesis focuses on the design and principles for teaching argumentation in EFL oral communication classrooms at a Thai university. In short, the key components of this research are a focus on argumentation and, drawing on sociocultural theory, the mediational means to support this in the classroom. These are expressed in my research questions as follows:

RQ1: What sort of mediational tool can provide scaffolding to Thai students to make arguments in an English communication classroom at a university in Thailand?

RQ2: How do the social and cultural practices previously experienced by the participants shape their predispositions to engage in argumentative debates in university EFL classes?

RQ3: What principles for teaching and learning might be derived from this research study to support the teaching and learning of argumentation in EFL Oral Communication class in the Thai higher educational context?

The research questions (RQs) are addressed in separate chapters. RQ1 is explored in Chapters 5 and 6. The findings for RQ2 and RQ3 are addressed in Chapters 7 and 8, respectively. I then return to all three in my conclusion.

1.11 **Thesis outline**

The first part of the thesis consisting of Chapters 1 to 4 provides background information and theoretical foundations to the research. The second part, Chapters 5 to 8, presents the findings of the research and the discussion on the findings. The conceptual part of the thesis begins in Chapter 2 with an exploration of the general concepts of argumentation and in what way debate is characterised as a kind of argumentation. There is also a review of the subtexts of argumentation theory in teaching practices in science education and the EFL/ESL context in Asia. The final part of this chapter provides a broad overview of the potential to integrate dialogical argumentation in the EFL context in Thailand.

Chapter 3 sets out the conceptual framework adopted in this study. Drawing upon the work of Vygotsky's sociocultural approach to learning and Wertsch's sociocultural approach to mediated action, I begin with a discussion of the connection between the nature of human communication, social activities and higher cognitive development. The latter part of the chapter highlights the relevance of sociocultural theory to the way we approach the teaching of argumentation in a range of educational contexts,

including foreign language teaching. Among the key sociocultural concepts explored in the chapter are 'internalisation', the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD) and 'mediation'.

Chapter 4 explores the epistemology underpinning this research. This research adopted a design-based research (DBR) approach for a number of reasons. First, the characteristics of DBR, which are introduced in the first part of this chapter, facilitates the creation of knowledge around the design of the mediational tools and the pedagogical principles for fostering argumentation skills in an EFL educational context in Thailand. Secondly, DBR allows for the design, testing and refinement of the tools and contributes to an understanding of the extent to which the mediational tools, which have been developed and driven by a theoretical framework, actually work in practice. This research drew upon the qualitative research design process, collecting data mainly through observations and interviews. Thematic analysis of the qualitative data was used as an analytical tool to understand the extent to which the mediational tools can support the teaching of argumentation and engage students in debate. Some other themes to emerge included how the students' prior experiences and the sociocultural practices in an EFL classroom shaped their predisposition about engagement in oral debate at a Thai university.

The second part of the thesis reports the findings, provides the discussion and begins in Chapters 5. The first part of the Chapter offers the rationale and details how the tools for scaffolding argumentation skills were designed and developed and how debate was implemented within the framework of DBR. The chapter also outlines how Toulmin's argument pattern (TAP) was employed to inform the students about the structure of arguments, which was necessary for the process of arguing in debate. The latter part of the chapter reports on the analyses of the observational data collected during the testing of the interventions in the pilot studies and the major study. These preliminary studies confirmed the limitations of the scaffolding tools for debate and consequently the interventions were refined from the first and second cyclic iterations.

Chapter 6 introduces the themes generated from the analysis of the interview data. The themes provided insights into how the participants perceived their experience when

engaging in the scaffolding tools and debate. The first theme focuses on the impact of the participants' positive and negative emotional states which occurred prior to, during and after the task events on their mediated actions in the task activities. The second theme suggests that the participants' performance in the tasks was dependent on their background knowledge and English language proficiency. The final theme highlights the issues around critical thinking and argumentation. The participants' perceptions and experiences in the task events combined activities associated with cognitive load, cognitive operation (reasoning) and improvisation simultaneously under time pressure.

In Chapter 7, the EFL classroom practices which the participants experienced in their high schools and universities were explored. The analysis of the qualitative data from the interviews illustrated how social, cultural and institutional contexts shaped the participants' predispositions to engage in argumentation and their mediated actions in the tasks. The data analysis generated four issues which limited the participants' abilities in dealing with the tasks. First, the drive for high schools to equip students with the skills to navigate university admission examinations limits the students' exposure to English language production. Secondly, the students' overreliance on scripting speech in English language production negatively impacted the development of their capacities and their ability to deal with interactions in a spontaneous situation. Such situations which would ordinarily require an improvisation in conversational English. Further, the classroom environment, such as the teacher's characteristics and peer relationships influenced the degree to which the participants were willing to contribute to the EFL classroom discussions. Those social, cultural and institutional contexts and constraints that the participants previously encountered in schools and in the universities impacted the participants' attitudes and expectations when taking part in argumentative debates in university EFL classes.

Finally, Chapter 8 outlines the principles for teaching argumentation skills in an EFL classroom at a Thai university. Following the DBR model, the principles were generated from my reflections on the entire process of the data collection and the examination of the themes. Further, I discuss the contribution which the research has

made to knowledge in the area of ELT in the EFL/ESL contexts and the limitations of the research. This chapter also provides recommendation about the areas for future research. The final part of the chapter addresses my reflection on my position as a researcher of this study.

Chapter 2 Teaching English through argumentation

2.1 Overview

> Behind the informal logic movement is a longer tradition of classical and contemporary rhetoric, concerned with the deployment of thinking in the real world in the form of argumentation. (Andrews, 2015, p. 50)

Chapter 1 describes how the term 'critical thinking' has been shaped and defined over time. In this thesis, I recognise that critical thinking is an internal process. That is, it is a reflective process which takes place within an individual's mind. This process can also be understood as an assortment of skills which a person uses for inquiring, gathering and analysing information, as well as evaluating that information or evidence in order to determine a conclusion by employing legitimate reasoning. In other words, I understand that the process of critical thinking involves logic and reasoning and the process manifests itself in argumentative exchanges in which the participants are also required to use logic, reasoning and the same collection of skills in order to persuade each other.

Chapter 2 provides a critical review of the literature researching key topics related to the teaching of English through argumentation. First, to establish the ontological basis of the phenomenon under investigation here, I review the literature on what constitutes an 'argument', the 'process of argumentation' and how debate is a particular form of argument. I then document how the structural analyses associated with argumentation theory have influenced science education, as this area has a long convention of engaging with argumentation explicitly for both pedagogical and epistemological reasons. In particular, I examine how models of argumentation theories are used as pedagogical tools in reviewing domain-specific methods of scientific discourse to trial and validate theories. The elaboration of argumentation as a means to scrutinise the ephemeral and dynamic nature of scientific knowledge is also explored. Section 2.4 addresses the standard levels for English proficiency associated with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) and its emphasis on the complex use of argument at higher proficiency levels. Examples of how debate has been used as an instructional tool to foster critical thinking and

communicative competence in L2 classrooms has crystallised the view that argumentation in a debate format has a potential to be implemented in an English oral communication classroom at a university. There follows a review of how argumentation is currently being taught in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programmes, including argumentative writing in L2 in particular. The body of research that examined L2 students' argumentative writing highlights the use of Toulmin's model which has been widely employed in science education in analysing the structure and quality of arguments in the students' argumentative essays. As this research is framed within the context of an English oral communication classroom at a Thai university, it is important to review the literature in the area of dialogical argumentation in EFL educational settings, in particular to examine how it has been employed as a pedagogical model in such settings. I review the influence of the students' L1 culture and how this impacts their performance in oral argumentation, which is a common practice in the Western culture. In Section 2.7, I touch upon the importance of rhetoric in the teaching of argumentation with a focus on the teaching of rhetorical patterns and the impact on students' L2 writings. Some observations from the limited studies that look at argumentation and debate in EFL in East Asia are also presented. This section also introduces the view that it is important to expose EFL students to the patterns of reasoning in the target language culture. The final part of this chapter discusses the aim of the review which is to provide useful insights and a context for designing mediational tools to foster critical thinking skills in English oral communication classrooms at a university level. This is discussed further in Chapter 5.

2.2 **What is argumentation?**

Argument has been described as the "umbrella under which all reasoning lies" (Goldstein, Crowell and Kuhn, 2009, p. 380). Argumentation theorists have tended to ground argument within the core principles of 'premises' (background beliefs and shared values and concepts) and 'defeasibility' (the degree to which an argument can be reviewed, modified or annulled). Premises are dynamic in that arguments can be naturally defeasible and can be supported or subject to a range of challenges, including refutations and other conflicting arguments.

Stephen Toulmin (1958, 2003) is considered the foremost of the theorists in this field as he developed a theoretical perspective and framework for analysing argumentative structure and tools for modelling arguments that are applied in the educational field (Erduran and Osborne, 2005; Zhang and Lu, 2014). There are key components of an argument for Toulmin that are interrelated and used to analyse arguments. These components are used to identify and analyse the premises, the relevance and sufficiency and the conclusion of an argument. An argument can be strong or weak depending on whether it is supported by facts, evidence, logic and reason. Others have built upon Toulmin's model and argue that the relationships between these arguments and premises (e.g. background beliefs) enable the process of argumentation to reveal prior background knowledge and tackle existing misconceptions. Importantly, various researchers confirm and identify the secondary Toulmin elements of argumentation - counterargument claims, counterargument data, rebuttal claims and rebuttal data - as indicative of superior argument quality (Bell and Linn, 2000; Jiménez-Aleixandre, Rodriguez and Duschl, 2000; Erduran, Simon and Osborne, 2004).

Argument has also been defined according to three major distinct categories or senses; as an object or a product, as a form of social interaction (Willard, 1983; O'Keefe, 1992; Gilbert, 2014) and as cognition (Hample, 1992). O'Keefe (1992) distinguishes two senses of argument and used numbers to indicate this differentiation. O'Keefe explains that argument1 in the first sense is the sort of claim a person makes or presents. Considering the dialectical aspect, an argument1 is regarded as a product of discourse and can be evaluated by the degree to which the rationale renders the argument believable. As the concept of critical thinking was centred around logical thinking, philosophers applied the former to the analysis of arguments and tended to concentrate on the features and quality of arguments (Quellmalz, 1987). Shifting away from its formal sense, argument1 can relate to an individual's performance in the construction of a legitimate conclusion. According to Toulmin's (1976) perspective, human knowledge and beliefs, which are man-made claims, are secured by the strength of the construction of arguments by which we are able to justify that they are sound. This view has been critiqued by some. For example, from the anthropological perspective, reasonableness and rationality are not seen as objective, universal and

static. Rather, they are taken to be seen as (inter)subjective, cultural-bound and dynamic (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004). This presents a shift from a formal understanding of reasoning and rationality to an informal logic which is more 'common-sense' and places formal arguments into a more 'human' and real life context (Toulmin, 1976).

Argument2 is understood by argumentation theorists as the process of dialogical interaction in which two or more people engage and attempt to justify a standpoint or refute it by showing that the argument is unacceptable. Argument in this latter sense appears to be seen as a social activity and is associated with Goldman's (1999) 'dialogical' argumentation term, rather than 'monological' argumentation. From O'Keefe's (1992) point of view, nonsense discussions or quarrels can also be taken into account, and this argument2 could be unproductive or pointless. Additionally, from the philosophers' perceptions, argumentation yields a picture of knowledge (Willard, 1983). This pertains to the notion that new knowledge can be made through 'dialectic' argument which, for Aristotle, refers to the art of arguing for and against a standpoint in debate where premises which are not evidently true are used (van Eemeren *et al.*, 1996). Argument which constitutes dialectical debate, regarded as a test for truth, contributes to acknowledging our errors (Cohen, 2004). The author also notes that the truth claims that philosophers attempt to make would possibly be compelling, profound or even poor or false, depending on the analytical and argumentative process.

Hample (1992) marked the third sense of argument as argument0 and categorised it as cognition. Argument in this sense is characterised from a psychological perspective. Psychologists tend to investigate the process of forming and weighing argument in the mind (Kuhn, 1991). Argument0 encompasses the process of 'thinking out' an argument. These include elements such as noticing an argument, the memory processes associated with storage and retrieval, the reconstruction of cognitive elements, information processing or reasoning, the creative process to generate new arguments or respond to them, and the productive ability to provide form to utterances.

Although the concepts appear to be heterogeneous and their ontology widely contested, for van Eemeren and his colleagues 1996) argumentation functions as a particular kind of powerful interaction when it can convince and obtain agreement from the target audience. The authors define:

> Argumentation is a verbal and social activity of reason aimed at increasing (or decreasing) the acceptability of a controversial standpoint for the listener or reader, by putting forward a constellation of propositions intended to justify (or refute) the standpoint before a rational judge (van Eemeren et al., 1996, p. 5).

Overall, the above definition can be considered as dialogical argumentation. To conceptualise the definition proposed by van Eemeren and his colleagues, the term 'argumentation' basically involves a verbal activity, a social activity and a rational activity. Similar to the previous definitions, the authors also view it as a 'process-product' practice (van Eemeren *et al.*, 1996; van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004). In terms of process, the authors described argumentation as the act of arguing in which the actors shows an effort to justify a standpoint on the matter or refute it by showing that its argument is unacceptable. Apart from its sense as a process, the authors also emphasise the end product of the act of arguing, or in other words, the achievement of the practice which is calculated by the degree to which the rationale renders the argument believable. The legitimacy of the end product has an impact on the acceptability for the act of arguing. Legitimate argument could function as a particular kind of powerful interaction when it convinces and obtains agreement from the target audience (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004). In other words, the achievement of the practice is calculated by the degree to which a person is capable of constructing legitimate arguments.

In conclusion, argumentation theorists generally distinguish between arguments as 'a product', as 'a process of social interaction', and as 'cognition'. When an argument is categorised as a product, testing the validity of an argument becomes of interest to logicians. This concept appears to have implications for teaching and learning how to construct a good and effective argument. With the perspective which emphasises an argument as a process, teaching and learning is central to creating a condition for students to engage in the process of arguing in order to learn or construct knowledge

from arguing. That an argument can also be viewed as a cognitive process informs an investigation of an individual's process of thinking in terms of the skills in analysing an argument and constructing a new argument.

It is necessary to clarify that in the present study I am using the term 'argument' to refer to the product or object or content, and the term 'argumentation' denotes the process of developing arguments. From the perspective of a process, argumentation, which is defined as a verbal and social activity (van Eemeren *et al.*, 1996), can be viewed as a social practice which is likely to be vary within different cultures in a given context. For example, argumentation would be considered to have greatly contributed to the construction of knowledge in the Western world, whereas in the Thai context it seems to have the nature of a non-overt social practice.

Additionally, argumentation in the informal logic perspective can be viewed as a cultural practice when it involves persuading audiences to agree with a speaker's point of view. Van Eemeren and his colleagues also emphasise that the aim of argumentation is to convince an audience with well-grounded arguments. Extending the idea that audiences agreed with what the speaker said does not suggest that a given argument is absolutely right. Therefore, apart from the aim of providing a sound argument, the speaker is required to regard the role of audiences as crucial for making arguments. With regard to this objective, a technique or a manner used in argumentation needs to be effective at convincing and persuading audiences. Linking this concept to the rhetoric of Aristotle's version, apart from a series of tasks to be performed, such as deciding content and arranging subject matter, the speaker is required to select the right word choice or structure and to plan their speech with appropriate intonation, facial expressions and gestures (van Eemeren *et al.*, 1996). Paralinguistic and non-vocal phenomena differ across cultures and this can, to a lesser or greater extent, arouse emotions or positive or negative responses from audiences. In short, advancing legitimate claims alone might be inadequate for increasing or decreasing acceptability of viewpoints for audiences. Understanding cultural contexts is likely to have a great influence on convincing audiences.

With this in mind, this research study does not look at an argument as a discrete product, process or cognitive progressions; rather it is the combination of three different perspectives in which logic, an arguing process and a cognitive process come into play. As a researcher, I cannot frame the investigation only in terms of the logic of arguments and I cannot ignore the fact that an argument involves an individual's cognitive process and is a discursive procedure which ought to occur between people. The concept of argumentation framed in this research study is that it occurs, in general, in the form and context of dialogue in which rationality comes into play.

To illustrate, according to my understanding, within argumentative exchanges, I observed two processes - dialectical and dialogical. The dialectical process involves logic and reasoning and focuses on a product of argumentative exchanges. With regard to the dialogical aspect, it is concerned with a discursive process. Emerging from this progression, there are two different ideas consisting of argument and argumentation. I associated "argument" with the dialectical process and "argumentation" with the dialogical process. My focus in this study is that in dialogical argumentation two parties who hold different standpoints use logic and reasoning to construct legitimate arguments and counterarguments in order to persuade each other and the audience.

2.2.1 **Debate as argumentation**

Academics who study argumentation theory, such as Nussbaum and Edwards (2011) and Macagno, Mayweg-Paus and Kuhn (2015) have converged on a definition for debate that emphasises the dialogical and collaborative nature of a process to use logical reasoning to consider various perspectives and arrive at a judgment or decision. The process can be applied by an individual to come to a decision or it can be used by an individual or group to persuade others to agree with them or change the opinions, perspectives or values of others. Although debate is an argumentative activity its function or meaning can be defined by the perspectives and aims of the interlocutors.

According to Akerman and Neale (2011, p. 9) from the English Speaking Union, debate can be described as:

> A formal discussion where two opposing sides follow a set of pre-agreed rules to engage in an oral exchange of different points of view on an issue. Formal debates are commonly seen in public meetings or legislative assemblies, where individuals freely choose which side of an issue to support, and also in schools or university competitions, where the participants are often assigned a particular side for which to advocate.

This definition is quite prescribed and ceremonial and conjures up images of the Oxford Union and parliamentary debates in the House of Commons. However, the definition of debates from other organisations suggests a less formal characterisation. The Cambridge Union (2019) regards it as:

> A fun activity akin to a game in which we examine ideas and policies with the aim of persuading people within an organised structure. It allows us to consider the world around us by thinking about different arguments, engaging with opposing views and speaking strategically.

The International Debate Education Association (IDEA) is an organisation that educates young people worldwide in debate by raising their awareness about worldwide issues in order to give them a voice for their ideas. IDEA organises debate events for young people, "especially those who are marginalized - LGBT and ethnic communities, civic rights groups, supporters of gender diversity and democracy, and the socially and politically excluded" (The International Debate Education Association, no date). The Cambridge Union definition appears to promote a convivial atmosphere that promotes self-awareness and strategic aims. The IDEA Web focuses on debate as a means for social intercourse for marginalised members of a community in a safe environment. Alternatively, the QatarDebate Centre (2019) wishes to "develop, support and raise the standard of open discussion and debate among students in Qatar and across the Middle East…", suggesting an aspiration within the organisation to promote freedom of dissent in the region.

Many scholars have documented how debate has played an exceptional role in the history of Western civilisation and in shaping the public realm (Deane, 2005; Kennedy, 2007; Sunay, 2012). The classical and rhetorical tradition can be traced back to Ancient Greece and the emergence of democracy. Regardless, debate still plays a crucial role in modern democratic politics that can be readily observed in parliamentary democracies, such as in the House of Commons.

Although debate has played a fundamental role within society in the Western world for at least two thousand years its role, until recently, in educational theory was relatively marginal. That said, debating techniques were used as teaching strategies by the Ancient Greeks. However, in the last couple of decades there is an increasing appetite to use debate as a pedagogical tool to augment teaching and learning. For example, Želježič (2017) has described how the Institute for Culture Dialogue in Slovenia was originally established to promote debate as a competitive discipline, however since 1997 the Institute has been organising educational seminars for the teachers who wanted to use debate as a teaching method.

This recent urge for utilising debate as a pedagogical tool stems from the belief that academic debate in the form of 'peer to peer' and 'learner to expert' dialogue is an effective device for mediating and fostering the development of critical thinking skills (Alishahi and Stevenson, 2005; Erduran, Ardac and Yakmaci-Guzel, 2006; Kennedy, 2007). Expanding Vygotsky's theory, many researchers argue that critical dialogue and social interaction provides a scaffolding effect for so-called higher mental functions.

Although the different emphasises placed by the various debating organisations above confirms the dynamisms and variations of debating practices, a number of researchers and bodies have described some of the defining characteristics associated with formal debate. Again, it should be noted that the particular environment and purpose is likely to dictate what kind of debate is appropriate. Some common characteristics of a formal debate include: it is a process by which ideas and opinions are advanced, developed and considered carefully; it requires research and deliberate planning; the argumentations are often multidimensional and well developed; the ideas, or claims are challenged and refuted; a positive outcome relies on an act of persuasion; it follows formal rules and procedures for interaction; it is competitive in most instances and there are clear winners; the winners are assessed according to the quality of persuasion.

However, as I have mentioned, argumentation and debate occur in a sociocultural context. For teachers and interlocutors, the sophisticated nature of the debating procedures, along with the need for planning and procedural interaction, may

dissuade them from use. Debating can also be precarious in that certain personalities may try to dominate during proceedings. Further, some have argued that by requiring interlocutors to defend one side of an argument and reject the other side during a motion, debate encourages a confrontational and oppositional logic which can lead to a reductionist approach to complex problems (Kennedy, 2007). Alternatively, advocates of debate would contend that the oppositional nature forces interlocutors to find the common ground during the discourse. Thus, the debaters must adapt to the logic of their opponents to find this common ground.

In adapting to the use of debate in a Japanese EFL classroom, Jost (2018) has suggested an informal approach which allows students to debate with less emphasis on the formal procedures of debating and provides the flexibility to encourage L2 learning. Such a debate "can play [a] vital role for language learning and for developing critical thinking skills"(Jost, 2018 p. 40). The author recommends some simple guidelines for an informal debate in this setting including; allowing the students to select the topic that is simple and familiar; ensuring the students take a firm position; allowing groups/pairs to practise at will and having the students consider argumentation in advance.

There has been some published literature investigating the impact of using debate as an instructional tool in English classrooms and these studies reported a contribution to a significant improvement in critical thinking and speaking skills. Iman's (2017) experimental research study showed that a group of senior high school Indonesian students achieved higher critical thinking and speaking skills than the control group after the application of a debate strategy as the intervention. The rubric the researcher used for determining the students' critical thinking achievement was developed based on crucial distinguishing elements, such as identifying issues, recognizing context, evaluating assumptions and evidence, implication and conclusion. The aspects also overlap with the skills of argumentation.

Likewise, in Aclan and Aziz's (2015) study, the interview data of five debate experts and the focus group data of six debate students within the context of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries indicated that the debate activities

enhanced communication in distinct stages. The participants reported the improvement of their reading and writing skills in the pre-debate stage and their speaking skills in the actual debate stage. They also articulated an improvement of their listening skills in the comments from the adjudicators as well as speaking skills for asking questions in the post-debate stage.

In response to Aclan and Aziz's research finding, it should be noted that English proficiency is not the decisive factor which determines one's critical thinking ability. Nevertheless, some authors have expressed a concern that students with poor English language proficiency might not be able to engage in argumentation in English. For example, Trapp and colleagues (2005) voiced their concerns over the practical difficulties of performing an argumentation task in English because the task requires not only that the participants translate and speak in a different language, but also that they think, process, and persuade others in L2. Regarding the problematic issue around transferring L1 to English Németh and Kormos (2001) investigated how task-repetition, the long-term development of English language skills and a short-term focused intervention influenced the performance of Hungarian EFL learners in a series of oral argumentation tasks in their L1 and L2 over the period of two years. The findings showed that the repetition of the task helped students pay more attention to the content of their texts. Despite those positive results, the investigation showed that the participants had better argumentation skills in L1 and used a wide range of linguistic markers of arguments in L1 than in L2.

There is relatively little research in the literature addressing argumentation theory and debate in the L2 context, although what research that does exist is often carried out in Asia. In addition, no study has been conducted to investigate the development or design of interventions to teach dialogical argumentation in the EFL context in Thailand.

2.3 **Argumentation in science education**

The connection between argumentative theory and science education emerged when science educators began to champion the process of argumentation as fundamental to

scientific thinking (e.g. Dunbar, 1995; Driver, Newton and Osborne, 2000; Zohar and Nemet, 2002; Berland and Reiser, 2008; Bricker and Bell, 2008; Duschl, 2008; Nussbaum, Sinatra and Poliquin, 2008; Windschitl, Thompson and Braaten, 2008; Erduran and Jiménez-Aleixandre, 2010; Kuhn, 2010; McNeill, 2011). Prior to the movement for science education reform, science was viewed as an empirical process in which truth claims are deductively grounded in observations (Newton, Driver and Osborne, 1999). This perspective has shifted in that science is no longer perceived as purely objective. Presently, the goal of science education is not only the mastery of the use of evidence and scientific theory to construct explanations of the natural world but also an engagement in scientific practice and discourse to propose and defend explanations (Driver, Newton and Osborne, 2000; Duschl, Schweingruber and Shouse, 2007; Berland and Reiser, 2008; Bricker and Bell, 2008; Windschitl, Thompson and Braaten, 2008). The nature of constructing scientific explanations is usually portrayed as relatively objective, as the interlocutor is required to align their evidence with a claim. This feature suggests that scientific knowledge can be viewed as the product of argumentative discourse. In addition, scientific explanations are developed through a social process in which scientists engage in practices in which the goal also moves to defending explanations and persuading their peers of their understandings (Berland and Reiser, 2008; Bricker and Bell, 2008).

Berland and Reiser (2008) identified three goals for constructing and defending scientific explanations, including (1) using evidence and theory to make sense of the phenomenon; (2) an articulation of understanding and (3) persuading others of the explanation. However, Kuhn (2010) points out that the epistemological foundation of science is complicated and cannot be readily or simply transmitted to students. Sandoval (2005) suggests that students should be required to engage in argumentative discourse as a learning method to advance their own understanding of the epistemological foundations of science. Aligned with the goals of constructing and defending scientific explanations, as illustrated by Berland and Reiser (2008), the instructional goal in science education is to equip students with skills in constructing arguments (making sense), presenting arguments (articulation) and defending arguments (persuasion). Hence, science education reform put an emphasis on teaching

practices in which the generation of scientific knowledge is grounded in the processes of argumentation (National Research Council, 1996; Newton, Driver and Osborne, 1999; Osborne, 2010).

Argumentation also lies at the heart of the pedagogy of science education (Osborne, Erduran and Simon, 2004; Duschl, Schweingruber and Shouse, 2007). Science educators recognised the importance of engaging students in the scientific discourse in which they learn how to be rational and critical in choosing evidence and a theory to support their explanations and to persuade their peers with effective arguments. In order to develop strategies that help enhance students' argumentation skills, researchers in science education have been interested in studying students' argumentative competence through their use of arguments in two major areas, the structures of arguments and the processes of persuasion. First, numerous empirical studies have focused on form and the logical dimensions that have been carried out to analyse the structure of students' arguments in argumentative interactions or problem-solving tasks (e.g. Kelly, Druker and Chen, 1998; Bell and Linn, 2000; Jiménez-Aleixandre, Rodriguez and Duschl, 2000; Erduran, Simon and Osborne, 2004; Nussbaum, Sinatra and Poliquin, 2008; Simon, 2008; Reznitskaya, L. jen Kuo, *et al.*, 2009; McNeill, 2011). Apart from analysing the structure of arguments, a number of research studies have also assessed the quality of argument by focusing on the appropriateness and sufficiency of the reasons and evidence included in an argument (e.g. Erduran, Simon and Osborne, 2004; Nussbaum, Sinatra and Poliquin, 2008; Simon, 2008). With regard to the process, several researchers in this area (e.g. De Vries, Lund and Baker, 2002; Maloney and Simon, 2006; Clark and Sampson, 2008; Berland, 2011) have developed frameworks to analyse the nature of the moves in argumentation in order to understand how students persuade their interlocutors in argumentation.

With regard to the field of argument construction which marks argumentation as a product, Toulmin's argument pattern (TAP) (see Figure 2-1) has been frequently used as a pedagogical tool in science education and as an analytical framework for evaluating students' strengths or weaknesses of arguments (e.g. Kelly, Druker and Chen, 1998; Bell and Linn, 2000; Jiménez-Aleixandre, Rodriguez and Duschl, 2000;

Erduran, Simon and Osborne, 2004; Simon, 2008; McNeill, 2011). For example, Kelly, Druker and Chen (1998) and Jiménez-Aleixandre, Rodríguez and Duschl (2000) adopted TAP to ground their analysis of high school students' arguments and the reasoning processes the students used when responding to the problem-solving tasks and making their conclusions, whether in dyads or small groups. Bell and Lin (2000) and Simon (2008) reported the application of TAP in investigating the characteristics of arguments students generated through the use of argumentation software programmes in science classrooms. Those research studies reported on the analysis of students' argumentative interactions with a range of methods such as quantification and structuration maps. Erduran, Simon and Osborne (2004) also extended the applicability of TAP in an analysis of the data from the classroom discourse in order to generate a scheme for indicating quantity and quality of argumentation.

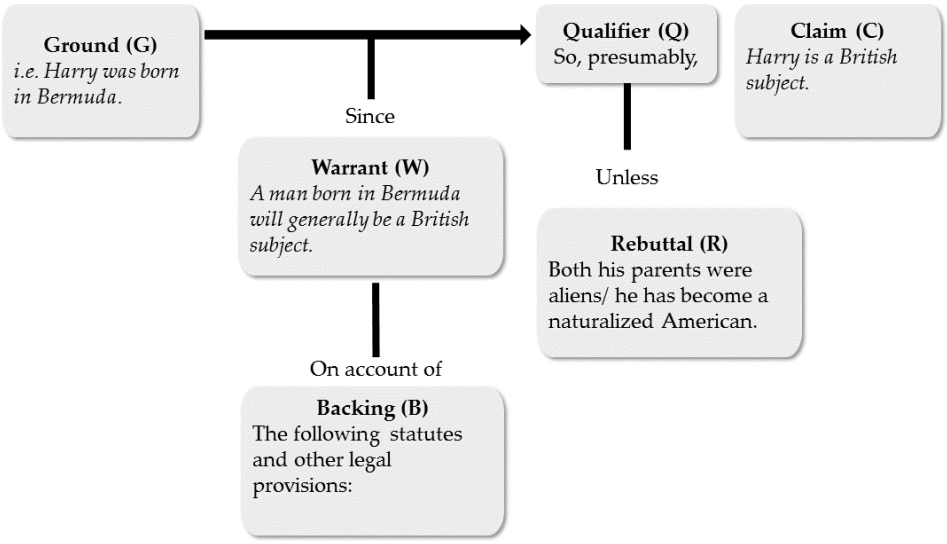


Figure 2-1 Toulmin's Argument Pattern (TAP)
Source: Toulmin (2003)

Toulmin (1958, 2003) argues that the traditional form "All A's are B's" (i.e. X is an A; All A's are B's; So X is a B.) has existential implications, especially, in the logic text-book reference, more than in everyday argumentation. He rejected the view that there are universal criteria supplied by formal logic to be applicable for assessing arguments in all fields including everyday argumentation (van Eemeren *et al.*, 1996). Therefore, Toulmin (1958, 2003) proposed the pattern of arguments which is said to be suitable for

the application of assessing argumentation in a broader human context. Toulmin's model of argument addresses the key elements which can be used to examine the function of arguments sentence by sentence in order to see how their validity or invalidity is connected with their layout. The first step in making argumentation is the addressing of a *claim* (C) (or a conclusion, a standpoint, an assertion, and so on). The facts upon which there is a ground for the claim is *data* (D). It is necessary to link the data to the claim with a *warran*t (W), which can confer different degrees of appropriateness and legitimacy to the original claim. Standing behind the warrant, *backing* (B) lends authority and justification to the warrant. Clearly stated, data (D) differs from backing (B) in that data needs to be provided to render an argument while backing (B) could be understood in case that warrant (W) is conceded without further challenge. *Modal qualifiers* (Q) indicates the degree of certainty and a rebuttal (R) signifies the circumstances in which the authority of the warrant would have to be put to one side. Referring to *An Introduction to Reasoning* (Toulmin, Rieke and Janik, 1978), although the term data (D) has been changed to ground (G), the original elements and their definitions still remain in the pattern. A visual representation of the layout of arguments in Figure 1 shows the steps in making justifiable claims.

It should be noted that Jiménez-Aleixandre, Rodríguez and Duschl (2000) and Erduran, Simon and Osborne (2004) reported methodological caveats concerning the use of TAP in argument analysis. In an investigation of students' interactions in science classrooms, they found that TAP was not sufficient for the interpretation of certain exchanges such as counterargument or refutation. It is very likely that Toulmin views argument as product created by an individual. The model is used as a technique for justifying a claim, supporting reasons and evidence. Second, the investigators encountered difficulties in breaking conversations into sections. As students' arguments were addressed in natural conversations, dividing utterances into categories based on the pattern of argument was reportedly the methodological caveat. Moreover, although TAP has been clearly described, it can still pose some ambiguities in the argument analysis. Erduran, Simon and Osborne's (2004) study reported an overlap of warrants and data/ground or warrants and backings in the specific context

of particular segments in the conversations. For example, statements which seem to be a claim could also be categorised as a warrant.

In addition to the investigation within the argumentative product, the strategic process of argumentation has been of interest to researchers in the science education. A number of empirical research studies (e.g. Reznitskaya *et al.*, 2001; Zohar and Nemet, 2002; Erduran, Simon and Osborne, 2004; Clark and Sampson, 2005; Berland and Reiser, 2008; Mayweg-Paus, Macagno and Kuhn, 2016) focus on the exploration of the argument types and the connection between the various argument moves in classroom discourse. The research findings have made a contribution to the development of appropriate strategies in order to devise scaffolds (e.g. on computer software) to facilitate students to tackle challenges in the argumentative process.

A number of interesting themes have emerged from research into the teaching of argumentation in science education. As indicated above, TAP is often used by science educators to analyse the nature and quality of students' arguments in response to specifically designed argumentation tasks. This is carried out by designating levels to the argumentation outcomes depending on the presence, patterns and combinations of any or all of the six elements of the TAP framework. Some studies have shown that adolescents and young learners have an ability to justify, defend and challenge a viewpoint during conversation and this is associated with a tendency to achieve goals (Eisenberg and Garvey, 1981; Schwarz and Glassner, 2003). Other researchers have expanded upon this work and suggest that although young learners may enter a science classroom with argumentation frameworks in place, they struggle to actually propose, support and develop specific topics or ideas (Jiménez-Aleixandre, Rodriguez and Duschl, 2000; Osborne, Erduran and Simon, 2004).

Interestingly, a consistent finding indicated a poor capacity to use higher levels of argumentation during a task. For example, Bell and Linn (2000) used TAP to review students' arguments to describe phenomena associated with light. The researchers found that the learners were capable of drawing on data but only occasionally supported their claims with warrants or backings. Jiménez-Aleixandre et al. (2000) also

obtained similar results in a Spanish secondary school classroom examining genetics instructions, with students showing a lesser frequency of justifications or warrants.

There are fewer studies that review certain aspects that are not examined by Toulmin's model, such as the content of the teachers' arguments, including the correctness and adequacy of the arguments from the perspective of scientific knowledge (Sampson and Clark, 2008). Another element that is rarely studied relates to how the ideas and claims are supported – the rhetoric and the interpersonal skills that are deployed. A noticeable observation in some of the studies in this field concerns the tendency, in particular in non-Western countries, for both the teachers and the interlocutors to avoid conflict during argumentation.

In a study investigating teachers' abilities to argue in South Africa (Braund *et al.*, 2013) the researchers found that there was a tendency for groups of teachers to drive arguments towards a consensual outcome, with an avoidance of rebuttals. In a follow-up paper from Braund et al. (2013) the researchers studied the capacity of student teachers in science to teach argumentation under three headings: teachers' planning for argumentation lessons; argumentation context and facilitating interaction and collaboration in argumentation. A successful planning exercise was examined according to both the preparedness and interaction in the classroom:

> In 'planning' we looked at wider issues than pure mechanics of the lesson plan; the extent to which learners had previously been made cognisant with the structure and purpose of argument, whether content and argumentation objectives and outcomes including a question for discussion had been made clear, if resource allocation was planned and evident and if there were notes on management of groups, for example role allocation and timed interventions or questions to facilitate argumentation. (Braund et al., 2013, p. 181)

Needless to say, without diligent planning the argumentation exercise did not proceed well. However, sufficient planning was not a guarantee of success, rather a prerequisite, as some learners who scored well on planning did not necessarily execute well on context or the facilitation of interaction and collaboration. With regard to argumentation context the authors warn that "argumentation can contain complex science content that, if not learned or tackled before, results in lessons where superficial and emotive claims dominate and science plays a minor role" (Braund *et al.*,

2013, p. 181). The researchers noted that very few of the learners scored well for both planning and intervention, as assessed by interaction and collaboration. Further,

> The quantity and quality of student teachers' interactions seems connected with their confidence in the classroom and the extent to which they felt comfortable in dealing with group work and managing the class effectively to achieve collaboration between learners. (Braund et al., 2013, p. 181)

Finally, it was noticeable how the learners shied away from instigating rebuttals and refutations during argumentation. Braund et al. (2013, p. 182) suggest that this "notion of inclusive argument rather than outright contradiction" was associated with the ethos of 'ubuntu' that prevails in Southern Africa. Ubuntu is a philosophy associated with maintaining harmonious relationships within a community and is linked with a lack of judgment of people. The authors suggest that 'ubuntu' contributed to the learners' refusal to judge individual contributions based on warrants and instead they would focus on the promotion of harmony. The authors indicate:

> Models of assessment of argumentation where qualifiers are valued equally to rebuttals may be one way of making sure that equal value is placed on Western style (Socratic) argumentation and inclusive ubuntu style African discourses. (Braund et al., 2013, p. 182)

From the literature review, it is clear that the nature of science education favours argumentative discourse because its goal is to construct and defend scientific explanations. The literature in this area made me aware that the implementation of argumentation in the EFL higher educational context, which has a different objective to science education, requires a careful instructional structure. An EFL classroom adopting the CLT approach requires a focus to not only transfer meaning into English, but also an ability to present reasoned arguments. For this reason, the design of mediational tools for the explicit teaching of argumentation is required. However, it is also worth emphasising that apart from a knowledge of argument structure, there are other factors contributing to the successful teaching and learning of argumentation, such as the learners' social and cultural contexts.

2.4 **Critical thinking and argumentation in the foreign language contexts**

Earlier I reviewed the literature on the significance of argumentation in science education. The focus of this section is how critical thinking is fostered through the use of argumentation and debate in educational settings and how these methods have been implemented in the context of foreign language education, particularly in EFL in Asia. I first outline the influence of the widely-recognised Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) which was developed by the Council of Europe. The platform provides a reference guide for the language capacity of EFL learners and takes into consideration an ability to argue with reasoning. The information provided in CEFR is useful for the design of language syllabuses and teaching and learning materials. The CEFR attributes language proficiency according to six levels, A1 to C2, with the A1 being the least proficient (The Council of Europe, 2001). These levels are informed by Reference Level Descriptions (RLDs) for national and regional languages. The first specification for these threshold levels was designed for learning English in 1975 and other descriptions have been adapted for a number of other languages.

A review of the Common Reference Levels provides an indication of the importance of argumentation in the assessment of language proficiency. For example, a C2 proficient user "can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation" (The Council of Europe, 2001, p. 5). For a spoken production, the C2 individual should be able to:

> Present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. (The Council of Europe, 2001, p. 6)

Most importantly, in assessing informal discussion with friends a C1 individual:

> Can easily follow and contribute to complex interactions between third parties in group discussion even on abstract, complex unfamiliar topics. (The Council of Europe, 2001, p. 14)

This then begs the question: what approaches are used to teach argumentation in the EFL classroom?

It should also be noted that the various descriptions of proficiency outlined in the CEFR infer that the learners should be capable of critical thinking. As outlined earlier any definitions of critical thinking assume certain characteristics. In the literature, this is often interpreted as a skill that involves an ability to infer, assess, examine and reason in order to make judgement. The CEFR guidelines for the higher proficiencies in formal discussion indicate an ability to use the target language to argue a position convincingly and to respond to enquiry and counterargument spontaneously and appropriately. This also supposes an ability to persuade in the target language, a characteristic indicative of higher order thinking.

The concept of using debate as a didactic tool to foster critical thinking flows from these observations. Some authors have advanced the concept that the development of critical thinking skills is important for L2 learning (Alnofaie, 2013; Li, 2016b). Research in second language acquisition (SLA) confirms that learners do not just simply recall language; rather, they engage in critical analysis and evaluation of the relevant material and instructions so that the language may be internalised (Li, 2016b). In addition, it is well advanced that cognition and higher order thinking and language development are closely linked. Developing critical thinking is likely to promote higher L2 proficiency, and correspondingly, developing immersive second language abilities encourages deep thinking skills. In response to the demand for cultivating communication skills and critical thinking, the question is what approaches in ELT can effectively engage EFL students to develop these skills. As it is stated:

> Limited progress has been made in addressing developing learners' higher order thinking skills in second language education (e.g. Li, 2011). Similarly, little progress has been made in answering some of the most pertinent questions that matter to second language acquisition: what exactly (higher order) thinking skills do second language learners need to acquire in order to regulate and facilitate their learning? How do language teachers create an environment or space to develop learners' good thinking skills when they teach a foreign language? (Li, 2016b, p. 267)

In line with an attempt to unite communicative skills, critical thinking and debate, one of the first known research studies in the context of EFL classroom to evaluate some of these issues was carried out in 2009 by an Australian teacher of EFL in Hong Kong , Sam Greenland, when he assessed student performance during debates in an EFL

classroom (Želježič, 2017). Greenland claimed that debate is an effective tool for developing critical thinking and oral interactional skills. The first major report to present a detailed review of the research linking debate to critical thinking was carried out by Rodie Akerman and Ian Neale of the English Speaking Union in 2011. The report, entitled 'Debating the Evidence' focused on debate activities in both classrooms and tournaments. It did not concentrate on just activities in Teaching English as a Foreign Language or second language acquisition, however a number of studies that investigated students for whom English was a second language were included. Strikingly, the report asserted two key findings that are of the utmost importance for this study. Namely, both qualitative and quantitative research confirms that debating activities in the classroom improves critical thinking. In addition, with regard to SLA:

> Students' perceptions provide strong evidence that taking part in debate activities leads to improvements in their communication and argumentation skills, including improved English when it is not their first language. (Akerman and Neale, 2011, p. 5)

This increase in critical thinking capacity was measured using the Watson-Glaser test. The latter assesses five abilities:

> Defining a problem; selecting relevant information for its solution; recognising assumptions; formulating and selecting relevant hypotheses; and drawing valid conclusions and judging the validity of inferences. (Akerman and Neale, 2011, p. 19)

Intuitively, these abilities are important in any debating activity, in that they involve a process whereby a problem has to be addressed; arguments are made, challenged and defended; evidence is presented and evaluated, and conclusions are drawn.

In addition to the above, other researchers have asserted the link between debating activities and critical thinking. For example, Freely and Steinberg (2009) argued that debaters learn to apply the principles of critical thinking to a problem that arises in debate. The process of debate necessitates an application of critical thinking skills, including the synthesis of information, the analysis and evaluation of arguments and evidence for making one's own judgements. In addition, the characteristics of debate

itself, which requires an objection to others' knowledge claims, forces participants to challenge and scrutinise the claims of the opponents.

It is also worth noting that debate is an effective dyadic method to improve students' oral communication skills in English. A number of investigators have confirmed that debate improves a range of communication skills (e.g. Kennedy, 2009; Brown, 2009; Akerman and Neale, 2011; Aclan and Aziz, 2015; Želježič, 2017; Iman, 2017). A number of researchers (e.g. Firth and Wagner, 2007; Littlewood, 2007; Savignon, 2007; Želježič, 2017) have indicated that there are fundamental problems in SLA, in particular with regard to the development of communicative and interactional competences in learners. According to their concerns, although communicative competence is the primary aim of contemporary L2 teaching, there are no systematically developed strategies of teaching it and any attempts to bring about L2 communicative competence, as anticipated by the CEFR, is not a smooth process. These deficiencies are considered to be due to a continuing grammar-based syllabus and superficial efforts at inculcating communicative skills. With the dual goals of teaching critical thinking and English oral communication skills, debate is a method which enables EFL teachers to achieve the particular outcomes they seek.

The association between argumentation and critical thinking has been explored mostly in the area of English for Academic Purposes (EAP)[9], particularly academic writing. The skills of argumentation have long been recognised as an integral component of academic studies at the university level, particularly in reading and writing (Varghese and Abraham, 1998; Németh and Kormos, 2001). In the context of reading and listening, a reader and a listener need an ability to comprehend information within an argument and identify propositions within the argument. In argumentative writing and discussions, a writer and a speaker need to be able to express her position and deliver sound arguments to convince the target audience. According to Jordan (1997),

[9] English for Academic Purposes (EAP) takes place in a wide range of educational settings, ranging from an entirely English speaking context to an English as a Second Language (ESL) context (e.g. African countries, India) and an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context (e.g. Finland, Thailand) (Jordan, 1997). EAP syllabuses in the ESL or EFL contexts are often designed to develop undergraduates' or postgraduates' abilities to use English for studying purposes in a formal setting.

EAP involves training students to appropriately digest and master the English language for studying purposes within the formal education system. With regard to reading arguments, students are often required to identify and evaluate propositions presented in texts. Students are also required to use their oral argumentation skills when participating in seminars and classroom discussions. Concerning the process of writing, the argumentative essay is the common form of academic genre that many learners, including social science, arts and humanities students, are required to engage with (Wu, 2006; Wingate, 2012). In a process of producing a written text, students participate in a range of activities, including brainstorming, discussing, analysing, synthesising and evaluating materials, planning, drafting, self-evaluating, peer-evaluating and revising (Jordan, 1997). These doings reveal that academic writing requires higher-order thinking skills and an ability to construct an argument.

2.5 **Argumentative writing in foreign language educational contexts**

In this section, I review the relevant literature that explores the genre of argumentative writing in the L2 context and how it has been implemented and evaluated. Argumentative writing requires sophisticated cognitive and linguistic abilities (Nippold and Ward-Lonergan, 2010). Several research studies have confirmed that argumentative writing is a difficult genre for both ESL and EFL students (Ka-Kan-Dee and Kaur, 2014). Salter-Dvorak (2016) points out the differences between academic writing in L1 and L2. Apart from developing content, L2 writers need to codify ideas into English as well as maintain the accuracy of the target language. Additionally, the author distinguishes between skilled writers and novice writers. Skilled writers redraft their academic essays, focusing on content or meaning and identifying dissonance in the text, however novice writers make local revisions by focusing on language or accuracy. Furthermore, the skilled writers reorganise the plan and make additions to provide patterns for arguments they are making whereas the novice writers stick to the prevailing plan. Zamel (1985) emphasises that deep writing skills will not develop without focusing on content. It can be conjectured that the essence of argumentative writing in L2 is developing a line of argument in texts, rather than purely focusing on language and accuracy at sentence level.

With regard to the issues around the difficulties students encounter when writing argumentative essays in L2, there is some published evidence of a correlation between English proficiency and critical thinking ability. Rashid and Hashim's (2008) investigation outlined a positive correlation between critical thinking abilities and the English language proficiencies of 280 Malaysian undergraduates from different study programmes. The researchers conclude that a certain degree of English proficiency positively influences the students' abilities to exercise critical thinking. Although the overall findings suggest that students who are proficient in English may possess critical thinking ability, there are also students who possess English proficiency but are weak in their critical thinking ability. The researchers argue that those findings lend support to interpretation of Whorf's theory of linguistic relativity (Whorf, 1941) which argues that language is not solely responsible for determining one's thoughts. Although language partly contributes to the shaping of thoughts, according to the theory, it also depends on the laws of reasoning which are supposed to be universal (Whorf, 1940, 1941).

Some research studies (e.g. Ka-Kan-Dee and Kaur, 2014; Rusfandi, 2015) found that limited English (L2) proficiency had an impact on students' abilities to present the opposing viewpoints in their argumentative writing. Rusfandi's (2015) work, which took the view of argumentation as dialogical, emphasised the presence of counterarguments as an important feature of argumentative writing. The presence of opposing views shows the writers' reflective abilities and produces a better quality of argument and persuasion. The researcher investigated the potential use of the argument-counterargument structure in English essays of 45 third-year English major Indonesian students. The study also examined whether English (L2) proficiency affected the use of the argument-counterargument structure in the essays. Ninety minutes were allocated to each of the writing tasks, in Indonesian (L1) and English (L2), respectively. Their essays were analysed to examine whether there was consistency in the use of the argument-counterargument structure in both L1 and L2. About 45% of the participants' English proficiency was at an advanced elementary level. The results indicated that the majority of L1 and L2 essays presented a one-sided model of argumentation, stating the main claims with justification. Additionally,

relatively low English proficiency was found to be one of the factors behind the participants' incapability to present other-sided views in their essays. According to Rusfandi (2015), the participants' lack of understandings about the value of the argument-counterargument structure affected their abilities in making their essays more persuasive. Interestingly, an alternative reason for the participants poor performance was suggested to be related to the nature of the respective L1 and L2 languages. Unlike writing in English, which appears to adopt a form of writer-reader interaction, Indonesian writing is often characterised as reader-responsible. With regard to Rusfandi's research finding, my own view is that the students would not have a lack of understanding about the value of counterarguments. However, it is likely that they were more familiar with producing argumentative writing in a monological form through which they deliver one-sided arguments to convince readers.

2.5.1 **Use of Toulmin's model in monological argumentation**

Contextually, argumentation is often characterised as a dialogical discourse in which two or more persons engage to collaboratively construct knowledge or solve problematical issues with reasonableness. Viewing argument as a process, argumentation in academic writing can be perceived as monological rather than dialogical. Goldman (1999) distinguishes between dialogical and monological argumentation. The latter is an argumentation delivered by a single participant and Goldman defined monological argumentation from the perspective of social epistemology as relatively similar to simple testimony which represents a writer or a speaker as an informant who knows a certain proposition and wishes to transmit this known truth to an audience. Compared to dialogic argumentation, monological argumentation is more frequently used in academic writing and academic oral presentation. The characteristic of monological argumentation seems analogous to a one-way communication and it is less likely to promote an exploration of the validity of one's own asserted conclusions. When a monological arguer violates a condition for a legitimate argument but still believes in her conclusions and justification, there is a likelihood that her conclusions can be true, especially when receiving an acceptability from a target audience (Goldman, 1999). Likewise, in argumentative writing in EAP

students manifest themselves as informants who attempt to articulate their stances and conclusions and transmit their justified arguments to the target audience. The characteristic of monological argumentation is less likely to encourage EAP students to evaluate and inquire about each other's claims and justification. Rather, students tend to only articulate their stances and conclusions and transmit their justified arguments to the target audience. Novice writers may not present opposing views in their argumentative essays that show a better quality of argument and persuasion. In this regard, academic writing involves not only developing content but also a coherence and a pattern of argument that attempts to persuade the audience (Basturkmen and von Randow, 2014).

As discussed previously, argumentative writing is a sort of monological argumentation because it is the writers alone who deliver their messages. In the same way, TAP, which has been applied to the analysis of students' argumentative writing in those research studies, can be viewed through the lenses of monological argumentation. Referring to Figure 2-1, I would argue that TAP is fundamentally monological rather than dialogical. The diagram appears to be simply applied to texts produced by a single person rather than an interaction between two or more people (Schwarz and Baker, 2017). For this reason, TAP has been used across a range of disciplines to provide a structural analysis of argumentation and allow for an identification of the elements of an argument. Epistemologically, a modification of the model is probably required for an application of TAP into dialogical argumentation to be able to facilitate the development of HMFs through social interactions.

The Toulmin model has mostly been used as a framework for analysis of argumentative writing in L1 settings (e.g. Nussbaum and Kardash, 2005) or as an instructional tool to teach argumentative writing in L1 contexts (e.g. Salter-Dvorak, 2016). Although very few relevant research studies exist in argumentative writing in L2 contexts, the studies in L1 still shed some light on the structural analysis and teaching of argumentation in L2 contexts (Qin and Karabacak, 2010). Many of the contexts covered in the literature on argumentation in foreign language teaching environments, and EAP in particular, have specifically focused on monological argumentation.

Regarding argumentative writing in the ESL/EFL context, there have been a number of investigations that have focused on the structure (e.g. Qin and Karabacak, 2010; Stapleton and Wu, 2015) and the quality of the components of the argument (e.g. Varghese and Abraham, 1998; Reznitskaya *et al.*, 2001, 2009; Nussbaum and Kardash, 2005; Qin and Karabacak, 2010; Rusfandi, 2015; Stapleton and Wu, 2015).

For example, Stapleton and Wu (2015) employed a rubric for coding argumentative structural elements modified from TAP to investigate the extent to which high school students in Hong Kong followed argumentative structure in their writing. The researchers developed an intervention in which argumentative elements were introduced to the students to facilitate argumentative writing tasks. The findings revealed several patterns of inadequacies in the reasoning, exposing the need to focus on and emphasise the quality of reasoning in students' persuasive writing. It is difficult to determine from this, and other studies, whether the students struggled with expressing thoughts and reasoning precisely into the target language or with constructing sound arguments.

A modified TAP was employed in Qin and Karabacak's (2010) work for a structural analysis of Chinese EFL undergraduates' argumentative essays in English, investigating how the employment of the adapted TAP related to the overall quality of argumentative writing. The students were prompted to write through reading two English opinion passages presenting opposing views regarding the same controversial topic. Similar to Stapleton and Wu's (2015) research findings, Qin and Karabacak (2010) showed that the vast majority of L2 students' argumentative essays presented at least two basic elements of argument structure: claim and data. However, a substantial majority of the writings did not include any counterarguments and rebuttals - the secondary elements of the Toulmin model. Of those works that presented all elements, those elements were evaluated as low in quality of reasoning. Qin and Karabacak advanced three reasons for this:

> The…students' tendency not to consider counterarguments is possibly attributable to 1) the need for substantial epistemological sophistication on the part of the writer to temporarily identify with a reader with opposing views (Hays and Brandt, 1992), 2) high cognitive load (Coirier et al., 1999), and 3) students

> unawareness of the effect of the use of counterarguments in enhancing the persuasiveness of their arguments (Nussbaum and Kardash, 2005). (Qin and Karabacak, 2010, p. 452)

It is clear from the findings of the aforementioned studies (Qin and Karabacak, 2010; Stapleton and Wu, 2015) that both L1 and L2 students in Asia find the secondary elements of the Toulmin model to be very challenging. Indeed, those research findings have pedagogical implications for the use of the Toulmin framework in L2 argumentative writing instruction. The findings implied that teachers should provide the students with conceptual knowledge about argument-counterargument structure and prompt them to use those elements. This would assist in moving beyond a one-sided perspective to displaying opposing viewpoints. Relevant literature in the areas of critical thinking (e.g. Freeley and Steinberg, 2009) emphasizes that a level of competency is a prerequisite to socialise effectively in a human communicative activity in which uncertainties and different opinions frequently emerge. Good critical thinkers do not dismiss ideas that conflict with their own. Rather, they are open-minded to multiple perspectives (Boss, 2015).

In line with Glaser's (1984) view, the ability to think and reason should be developed in contexts where cognitive activities are explicitly taught rather that as a subsequent add-on activity to what we have learned. Similar to several empirical studies (e.g. Zohar, Weinberger and Tamir, 1994; Alvarez Ortiz, 2007; Abrami *et al.*, 2008; Marin and Halpern, 2011) which suggest the explicit teaching of critical thinking, research studies around argumentation indicate the effectiveness of the explicit teaching of theoretical aspects of argument within or outside specific subjects. Indeed, TAP has been shown to be effective to teach students' argumentative writing in both L1 and L2 contexts. In a USA school environment, Yeh (1998) illustrated how explicit instructions based on the Toulmin model combined with immersion activities was more effective than a control group using just the immersion activities in helping students from the 7th grade in comprehending new knowledge and in applying this knowledge in other topics. An approach to use explicit instruction, in line with the Yeh's (1998) study, was pursued in the landmark study published by Varghese and Abraham (1998). In this study, the researchers trained bilingual Singaporean undergraduates in the structural and

interpersonal components of argumentation in L2 writing. They investigated the changes in argumentation skills of English-knowing after having received explicit instruction in TAP as a tool to identify and evaluate the persuasive texts they engaged in an Academic Reading and Writing module. Data analysis was carried out through the use of the modified TAP to evaluate the quality claims, grounds and warrants in students' pre-test and post-test essays. The findings indicated that after two months of the instructions the students produced statistically significant improvements in their structural argumentative capacity. They were able to grasp and effectively transfer the theoretical insights of TAP to their analysis and evaluation of argument structure in their own writing. They also showed an improvement in interpersonal features, in particular in their ability to persuade.

With regard to argumentative writing in EFL classroom in the Thai context, Ka-Kan-Dee and Kaur (2014) argue that Thai EFL students are incapable of writing good argumentative essays due to the insufficient practices during classroom instructions. The researchers incorporated think aloud protocols as a tool to identify the difficulties that 60 fourth year Thai EFL English major students encountered when writing a 265-word argumentative essay in English. According to the data analysis, the top five problematic issues around argumentative writing in L2 included linguistic knowledge (vocabulary 70% and grammar structure 67%), structure of argumentative writing 55%, providing solid evidence 53%, and organised ideas 40%.

Ka-Kan-Dee and Kaur's research studies confirmed that the group of Thai EFL students had an unclear conceptual knowledge about argument structures. It is important to provide the students with clear models of not only argument structure, but also counterargument structures – the so-called 'secondary Toulmin elements'. In addition, the students required adequate practice to help familiarise themselves with producing argumentative writing which takes other-sided perspectives into account. This is often referred to as a 'perspective taking' capacity. Another important issue to be considered is the students' limited linguistic knowledge which hindered their performance in argumentative writing. Therefore, it is important to consider selecting a

topic of argumentative essay that is suitable for their proficiency levels that enables students to effectively facilitate the process of their L2 production.

2.6 Dialogical argumentation in foreign language educational contexts

It is necessary to review existing literature to be able to visualise how dialogical argumentation has been incorporated in the EFL/ESL classrooms and consider issues around the pedagogical approaches or principles to teaching of argumentation in the EFL/ESL classrooms. However, there appears to be very few published research studies in this area. Mostly, existing literature illustrates and discusses how dialogical argumentation has been incorporated in the science classrooms. As previously discussed in Section 2.3, students' engagement in dialogical argumentation has been emphasised as a social process in science classrooms that can help them make sense of scientific explanations.

A great number of research studies across various disciplines, including EAP, have been undertaken based on the characteristics of how argument functions as product and process. Apart from that, some have argued that argumentation should function as a practice in a classroom community which should be situated regularly, repeated, and shared (Manz, 2015). The practices in those research studies appear to correspond with the sociocultural approach that emphasises the impact of human communicative activity on promoting an individual's internalisation. That is, an individual's acquisition of knowledge and skills in argumentation and English cannot be disconnected from an engagement in dialogical argumentation in the EFL classroom. Those EAP incorporated students–student interactions as a mediational means of teaching and learning. According to a sociocultural approach to learning, higher order thinking skills are developed through human social interactions. In the EAP context, the opportunities in which the students can engage include, for instance, seminars and argumentative interactions on a specific topic. According to Jordan (1997), in the EAP setting students are required to exercise their oral argumentation skills when engaging seminars or discussions on a specific topic and even in questioning in classrooms. However, there have been a relatively low number of research studies on dialogical argumentation in L2 in the EAP context. Those research studies do not prioritise a

structural analysis of students' argumentation. Rather, they applied dialogical argumentation to help develop or improve instructional strategies for teaching critical thinking in the EFL/ESL classroom.

There has been literature discussing the role of dialogic argumentation as part of an instructional method in EAP and other fields to help develop and enhance others skills (e.g. text comprehension, written argument) apart from higher-order thinking skills (Reznitskaya *et al.*, 2001, 2009; Murphy *et al.*, 2009). Congruent with academic reading skills which involves discovering the authors' views and seeking evidence for their own viewpoints (Jordan, 1997), text comprehension is concerned with a mastery of skills in comprehending information and identifying and evaluating propositions within the argument presented in texts. One of the key findings to emerge in the investigation from Murphy et al. (2009) is that various approaches to discussion promoted high-level comprehension – critical thinking, reasoning, and argumentation about and around the text.

2.6.1 **Dialogical argumentation as pedagogical models**

Several pedagogical models which draw upon dialogic argumentation have been incorporated in EAP to provide support to students when dealing with argumentative writing. This type of discourse practice has been carried out in the pre-writing stage to facilitate the generation of ideas and thought-provoking arguments. It has been also implemented between writing to support students' revisions of their arguments. For example, Salter-Dvorak's (2016) teaching model called 'oral presentation sandwich' and Pally's (1997) 'sustain content study approach' employed the concept of dialogue (e.g. teachers' feedback on arguments and peer questions and discussions) and oral presentation to help generate multiple perspectives which play a role in facilitating the students' revision of content in their argumentative essays. Additionally, VanderHeide and colleagues (2016) suggested an alternative dialogic method - argumentation as conversational turn. This approach allows students to learn literacy skills associated with argument talk and writing while participating in meaningful arguments within social contexts. The findings emerged in the research studies conducted by Reznitskaya et al. (e.g. Reznitskaya *et al.*, 2001; Reznitskaya, Anderson and Kuo, 2007; Reznitskaya,

L. jen Kuo, *et al.*, 2009) indicated that students' engagement in a classroom discussion functions as a mechanism that promotes their development of argumentation skills and contributes to their improved performance of written argument. Overall, these activities suggest that academic writing requires dialogues to promote learners' higher-order thinking skills necessary for constructing sound arguments to persuade the audience (Basturkmen and von Randow, 2014) and encourage further reflection on arguments.

Berland and McNeill's (2010) 'learning progression' provides guidance for teachers to think about and characterise an instructional environment which supports student progress in engaging in scientific argumentation. Their teaching approach combines theoretical aspects of argument - as the process and the product - and appears to be applicable to the EFL context. As shown in Figure 2-2, it is clear that the researchers emphasise three dimensions of learning progression: (1) problem context, (2) argumentative product and (3) argumentative process. Considering the dimensions of the learning progression, designing the problem contexts and establishing classroom norms can influence argumentative product. That is, argumentative products occur through the process students engage in and the questions they are investigating. For this reason, the problem context should be carefully developed in order to facilitate the students' engagement in argumentation. This is particularly important in student-student interactions, in which they state and defend their claims with evidence and reasons, and question and evaluate one another's claims. Apart from that, the teacher plays a role in facilitating the students in taking up the different discourse moves. Berland and McNeill maintain that the learning progression that is more of a continuum allows the teacher to control the problem context, gradually shifting its complexity from simple to complex or moving it back and forth. Additionally, a more complex context does not necessarily result in a more complex argumentative product and process. Similar to Osborne's (2010) view that students need to be demonstrated the norms of social interaction, the researchers emphasised that scaffolding for the argumentation framework and demonstrating the characteristics of argumentation discourse is necessary for guiding students to understand the expectations of their participation in argumentation and the functions of their interactions.

Berland and McNeill discussed the way the instructional strategies of the four examples of the discourse in science classrooms influenced the complexity of the argumentative product and process and mapped the instructional design onto the learning progression. The problem contexts of the four lessons varied from closely defined with a few choices to open-ended questions. The teachers facilitated the students in arguing with one another. The argumentative processes allowed students to interact within the classroom community and construct, defend, question, evaluate and revise arguments. The authors made a few observations about the lessons. First, the classrooms focused more on verbal argumentation as an instructional strategy for engaging students in argumentation as discourse, rather than entirely focusing on students' argumentative written words as the product. Secondly, the classroom activities suggested that the problem context is not age dependent. The most complex level was achievable even for students at a primary level if the teacher provides the students with the appropriate scaffolding and ensures their understanding of the discourse process. It is clear that the scaffolding the author emphasise is concerned with demonstrating the norms of the argumentative product and process. It appears to be compatible with scaffolding in argument teaching which is referred to as the explicit teaching of argumentation theory (Rapanta, Garcia-Mila and Gilabert, 2013).

Dimension	Simple → Complex			
Problem context	Question is closely defined with two-three potential answers.		Question is open with multiple potential answers.	
	Data set is small.	Data set is large.		Students define data set.
	Data set is limited to appropriate data.		Data set includes both appropriate and inappropriate data.	
Argumentative product	Claims are defended.	Claims are defended with evidence.	Claims are defended with evidence, and reasoning.	Claims are defended with supporting, appropriate evidence, reasoning that connects the claims and evidence, and a rebuttal of counterarguments.
	Claim addresses question asked.		Claim addresses question asked with a causal account.	
	Component (i.e. evidence, reasoning, rebuttal) is appropriate.		Component (i.e. evidence, reasoning, rebuttal) is appropriate and sufficient.	
Argumentative process	Teacher is a primary participant in the argumentative discourse.	Teacher facilitates students in arguing with one another.		Students are primary participants in the argumentative discourse.
	Claims are articulated, defended and questioned.	Claims are articulated, defended questioned, and evaluated.		Claims are articulated, defended, questioned, evaluated and revised.

Figure 2-2 Three dimensions of the learning progression
Source: Berland and McNeill (2010)

Despite no universal or static model of teaching of argumentation skills, the approach of explicitly teaching argument structure and the scaffolding of argumentation skills has been widely adopted across a wide range of disciplines. Different programmes adopt different forms of interaction. The aforementioned pedagogical models – the 'oral presentation sandwich', the 'sustain content study approach' and 'argumentation as conversational turn' - have been used to support the process of argumentative writing, rather than the teaching of oral argumentation. With regard to dialogical argumentation in the form of debate, there have been some research studies on the effectiveness of using debate as a mediational tool in EFL classrooms. However, there appears to be no previous research study and literature around the design principles

and tools to mediate dialogical argumentation or debate in EFL classrooms in Thailand.

In designing the mediational tools for dialogical argumentation in an EFL context, it is worth considering the impact of sociocultural perspectives on the adoption and success of a particular pedagogical approach to dialogical argumentation. One interesting example is addressed in a study conducted by Braund and colleagues (2013) in a South African setting. The authors were of the opinion that the culture and worldview associated with Ubuntu impacted the approach of student teachers in the teaching of argumentation in science education. Ubuntu aims to promote harmony and avoid conflict and the researchers suggested that this ethos influenced the tendency of student teachers to dissuade rebuttals and contradictions and promote inclusive argument.

Similarly, some research studies on the teaching and learning of argumentation in East Asia have suggested that sociocultural contexts influence the design of the mediational tools. For example, Japanese culture is heavily influenced by Confucian culture and Lieb (2008) has discussed the issues around the concerns the Japanese may have with regard to the confrontational nature of debate:

> It could be argued that because debate is built upon disagreement and critical thinking, it imposes an adversarial, individualistic style of communication on learners who are more accustomed to a harmonious, group-orientated communication style. (Lieb, 2008; p. 74)

Sociocultural perspectives also inform the rhetoric of argumentation in Chinese Confucianism. In the Western tradition, exchanging arguments is a common practice in debate. "Without the clash of arguments, debate would be nothing more than a series of persuasive speeches…" (Trapp *et al.*, 2005). In contrast, it seems preferable for Confucius to adopt some existing solutions to solve current problems rather than discussing and creating some new solutions (Xiong, 2013). The author elucidated how Confucianism emphasises being humble and respectful, rather than being innovative, bold or assertive. Hence, Confucius would not argue for or against certain standpoints.

In addition, many of Confucius' views were articulated not by means of declarative sentences, but by rhetorical questions.

In summary, in the domain of ELT, dialogical argumentation has been widely used in EAP to facilitate and support a process of academic writing. Although dialogic argumentation has been implemented in the EFL/ESL classroom in a debate format and has been proved to be an effective tool to develop critical thinking alongside oral communication skills, this kind of discourse is still not widely implemented. This may be because the implementation of debate in EFL classrooms requires specialists' teaching skills, including appropriate tools and lesson plans. Teachers might also be concerned about how engagement in debate requires not only linguistic knowledge, but also argumentation skills. Designing mediational tools which can effectively foster the target language and encourage the use of the core skills of argumentation would require the facilitator's knowledge of argumentation and the principles to manage debate in the classroom. Importantly, the difference in rhetorical traditions in L1 and in English might also play a role in students' performance in debate. Section 2.7 discusses the literature which focuses on the importance of rhetoric in argumentation, the cultural aspects of rhetoric and the importance of the teaching and learning of rhetoric in an EFL classroom.

2.7 **Rhetoric in EFL classroom**

An interesting and developing pattern in argumentation in EFL concerns the investigation of the importance of rhetoric in the EFL classroom. In Insight into EFL Teaching and Issues in Asia (2014), Otis Phillip Elliott explores the teaching of rhetorical patterns and the impact on students L2 writings. He explains how rhetoric is the "art of effective communication" (Lucas, 2010, p. 5) and how Greco-Roman conventions have influenced argument structure in the English language. For example, the standard structure of an essay written in English, comprising of the Introduction, Body and Conclusion, is heavily influenced by Greco-Roman traditions. In contrast, the four-part qi-cheng-zhuan-he approach prevails in the analysis of Chinese and other Asian texts. Qi means beginning and cheng denotes following, or some sort of an elaboration. Zhuan indicates a turning and He means a sort of generalised review.

Of course, in his definitive work, where he studied hundreds of college essays written by students from a variety of cultural backgrounds, Kaplan (1966) asserted that rhetoric had logic as its basis. And, in turn, this logic was affected by the culture and environment where the students had been brought up. Kaplan (1966) created a diagram categorising various thought patterns from a number of cultures, including English and Oriental. According to his theory, English writers tend to write in a direct and linear fashion. In contrast, writers from an Oriental background mainly write in an indirect fashion, depicted by Kaplan as a spiral picture. This is often interpreted as indicating that Western writers tend to accentuate rationality and reason, whereas the Eastern writer allows for the truth to unfold incidentally.

This may be criticised as an oversimplification however there is much research that indicates that different cultures may use different logic in organising their discourses. Jia (2005) analysed over 500 abstracts submitted to an ELT symposium and determined that the vast majority of Chinese participants followed an anticipated configural logic, whereas those from an Anglo-American background adhered to a direct approach that could be readily interpreted by the Toulmin model. The author concluded that the Chinese participants were heavily influenced by traditional Asian patterns in writing, although they also exemplified Anglo-American patterns. In another study, Kusumarasdyati (2017) analysed the quality of argumentative essays produced by Indonesian lecturers attending an English proficiency course. All the Eastern attendees illustrated in their essays what the author described as "circular patterns of thought" in their work, despite the author's attempts to scaffold the participants in how to organise ideas in an English argumentative essay. Another feature of the essays highlighted by the author had to do with the efforts by the participants to balance the essays and not proffer a clear opinion on the topic in question. Kusumarasdyati suggests that a major problem for the Indonesian writers is that they are grappling with "knowledge about the rhetoric in the target culture…[and have] little awareness about writing strategies" in L2 (Kusumarasdyati, 2017, p. 125).

Various researchers (e.g. Xiao, 2007; Seifoori et al. 2012; Chien, 2011) have stressed how important it is for EFL teachers to adopt certain strategies in the classroom. These

include metacognitive strategies, self-regulation and explicit direction in how to manipulate texts. Otis Phillip Elliott (2014) offers insightful specific instructions about how to teach EFL students about manipulating text at what the author refers to as the macrolevel and the microlevel. The former relates to how to control text with argumentation structure. Microlevel refers to manipulation "as with word choice and sentence variation" (Otis Phillip Elliott, 2014, p. 22). He indicates that teaching students to create these texts:

> …are more interesting to read, and are more audience-centred, because rhetorical patterns are designed to appeal to readers' senses and emotions, as well as to their logic and reasoning. (Otis Phillip Elliott, 2014, p. 22)

According to the author, example of these rhetorical devices should include anaphora, asyndeton, assonance, epistrophe and epanalepsis.

It is worth noting that the criteria that the scoring criteria of certain organisations associated with TEFL confirm the importance of both argument structure and rhetoric. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines indicates that for both listening and reading an ability to understand complex rhetorical structures is required to be categorised as distinguished: "at this level, listeners comprehend oral discourse that is length and dense, structurally complex, rich in cultural reference, idiomatic and colloquial" (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2012, p. 16).

A key study by Varghese and Abraham (1998) on Singaporean students arguing in English has also substantiated the importance of what they refer to as 'interpersonal components'. The authors outline how definitions of the term argument in writing research have focused on either the structure or the purpose of arguments. Of course, the substance of an argument, that is the claims, grounds and warrants, informs the structure of the argument and can be analysed using Toulmin's model. However, Varghese and Abraham also discuss how the purpose of an argument is closely linked to how persuasive it is. They highlight how a number of other researchers:

> Have argued the need to make all students (not just EFL or ESL students) more aware of the cultural aspects of writing (e.g. the preferred rhetorical structures,

> audience-adaptiveness strategies and modes of reasoning associated with different cultures and contexts) so that all students possess a repertoire of skills to draw upon as they make informed choices about which strategies/structures/modes to use when writing for different audience. (Varghese and Abraham, 1998, p. 288)

The authors devised two hypotheses for the study; the first was focused on the structure (the quality of claim, grounds and warrants) of the arguments after instruction; the second hypothesis predicted that the participants interpersonal level of argument – measured by a representation of the self, an ability to make rational and emotional appeals and a general stance towards discourse - would also improve. For the representation of self a high score was associated with a consistent, confident voice; for audience adaptiveness the researchers looked for a well-developed set of rational and emotional appeals and vivid imagery; finally, a balanced ability to see both sides and resolve the problem scored well for the discourse stance.

The results confirmed that instruction benefitted the students with regard to both the quality of argument structure and the impact of 'interpersonal components'. The three major components of argument, claims, data and warrants, improved with tutoring. Interestingly, from a rhetorical point of view, the authors also confirmed a significant improvement in the evaluations of interpersonal impact in an argument after instruction. They indicated how any persuasive strategy "ought to be judged in the context of the audience to whom the persuasive writing is addressed" (Varghese and Abraham, 1998, p. 298). With this in mind they devised a model for interpersonal negotiation in argument.

> The three major components of this model are the arguer, the reader and the text, and each of these components affects the persuasive value of an argument. If the arguer creates a clear persona with a trustworthy voice, s/he develops credibility as an arguer. The arguer also has to adapt to his/her assessment of the reader both in terms of the number and type of appeals (rational or emotive made to his/her audience…Any evaluation of the persuasiveness of an argument must obviously ask whether the argument achieves its goal in gaining the reader's acceptance of the viewpoint offered. Unlike analyses of claim, grounds and warrant, which are primarily text-based measures, assessment of the persuasiveness of an argument recognizes the interpersonal nature of argument. (Varghese and Abraham, 1998, pp. 298-299)

Although the authors do not mention rhetoric in this passage it is clear that for any arguer to adapt a trustworthy and persuasive voice that appeals, they need to write or speak in the idiom that the audience can relate to.

In summary, dialogical argumentation requires rhetoric which has logic and reasoning as its foundation in order to effectively construct arguments. With regard to reasoning, there is no universal archetype of reasoning and the pattern varies from culture to culture. Taking cultural aspects into account, it is more advantageous to have an understanding of the way native speakers present their arguments in the target language when communicating with them in real life contexts. Therefore, when teaching argumentation in an EFL classroom, it is important to expose students to the pattern of reasoning in the target language culture. This is intended to help them familiarise themselves with the argument structure they are expected to use when dealing with persuading the interlocutors in argumentative discourse in the target language. The next section discusses the tools used in the EFL context in Asia for analysing rhetoric argumentation.

2.8 **How can argumentation be taught in the EFL classroom?**

A number of themes have emerged from this literature review. There is a substantial range of literature on argumentation in the educational context and I have discussed how argumentation is used as a pedagogical instrument in the educational realm. This chapter has argued that argumentation which incorporates both dialectic and dialogical dimensions plays a particularly important role in the development and cultivation of critical thinking.

I have acknowledged that monological argumentation has some benefits in this area. However, the problematic issue is that students find it harder to anticipate or think of counterarguments when producing argumentative essays or speeches in a monological manner. From a theoretical point of view, argumentation in the EFL context should not be viewed solely as a product and nor should the focus be on the analysis of its rationality and fallacies. Rather, it should be treated as a social and dialogic process in which students discuss a problematic issue and co-construct knowledge. One

prominent characteristic of argumentation is that the speakers construct arguments with the aim of persuading their interlocutors to agree with them.

The review of the literature about argumentation in the EFL context informs us that monological argumentation has been widely implemented in academic writing. Although this type of argumentation facilitates the analysis of the patterns and quality of an argument, students were less likely to consider the limitations of their arguments or any other possibilities from other viewpoints. Thus, they were less likely to produce effective argumentative writing by drawing solely from their own perspectives. In contrast, dialogical argumentation allows a social interaction exchange to happen. Apart from advancing claims and arguments, speakers can respond to their interlocutors by making counterarguments and rebuttals. Moreover, in the right environment, students learn to express their mutual respect for each other's different opinions and understand that questioning each other's arguments is a normal part of the process.

There is surprisingly little peer-reviewed literature on the use of argumentation or debate in the EFL classroom. Nevertheless, researchers regularly use similar strategies for argument structure analysis using TAP for both L1 and L2 studies and so the former can still provide some information that has relevance for this study. It is clear from both the L1 and L2 studies that both the framing of goal-orientated tasks and/or explicit instruction produced more advanced Toulmin elements in the students' arguments. Although TAP or modified versions thereof are routinely used to evaluate argumentation structure, there is no standard approach to the teaching of argumentation to increase communicative competence and foster critical thinking skills. Without this scaffolding intervention, non-native English speakers struggled to cultivate complex arguments.

A number of research studies on argumentation in the EFL context reported the benefits of debate in developing critical thinking and English communication skills. This is because the debating process incorporates both dialectical and dialogical dimensions. Debate requires thinking and reasoning which is directly connected to critical thinking and presupposes not only the intensive structure of proposition and

interactional competence but also the form of persuasion. Debate and argumentation, which are common practices in the western culture, contributed to the foundation of a democratic culture. Debate provides a space for people who may have conflicting interests or different views of a common problem to deliberate problematic issues and try to convince one another with legitimate arguments.

Transposing this practice to teaching EFL in the Thai context, which is different to Western culture, is likely to be demanding. Some researchers have indicated that the confrontational and individualist nature of argumentation and debate can be challenging in Asian cultures. Eastern cultures promote harmonious and group-directed communication, however debating practitioners in the field in Asia contend that with the right structure and environment debating skills can be effectively taught in Asia. Of particular importance is the fostering of group activities and the promotion of a safe atmosphere where others' opinions are queried in a respectful manner.

Chapter 3 Conceptual framework: Sociocultural approach to learning through argumentation

3.1 Overview

In this Chapter, I provide the context for drawing upon a sociocultural approach to human learning through argumentation and the relevance of this approach. Three theoretical concepts of Vygotsky's theory are discussed: the process of internalisation, the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and mediation. These three key concepts provide the sociocultural framework for an individual's process of learning and the insights to consider when designing a mediational tool to explicitly teach argumentation skills in an EFL context. This chapter is organised into three major sections. Section 3.2 presents the rationale for drawing upon a sociocultural approach for this research study. Section 3.3 provides an overview of what Vygotsky's approach tells us about an individual's process of learning, focusing on the three key concepts outlined above and how that framed my understanding of how argumentation might be learned. The final part, Section 3.4 concentrates on the application of Vygotsky's theory to this research study in order to design a set of mediational tools for supporting a student's learning of argumentation skills.

3.2 Rationale for adopting sociocultural approach

In this study, I drew upon Vygotsky's sociocultural approach to learning and mental functioning development, and related aspects from other recent sociocultural theorists, to provide an explanation of how individuals learn and develop their intellectual capabilities. In turn, this helped to refine my understanding of the relationship between an individual's learning and the development of their argumentation skills. At least three reasons support the adoption of this approach. First, this paradigm has an increasing influence on the literature in the field of learning and development and emphasises the importance of social interactions in thinking processes (e.g. Rogoff, 1990; Swain and Lapkin, 1995; Measures, Carsten and Wells, 1997; Wegerif, Mercer and Dawes, 1999; Mercer, 2005). For example, a number of research studies that advocate the use of dialogue as means of fostering argumentation skills emphasise the importance of a sociocultural approach to this activity (e.g. Newton, Driver and

Osborne, 1999; Erduran, Simon and Osborne, 2004; Kuhn and Crowell, 2011; Rapanta, Garcia-Mila and Gilabert, 2013; Reznitskaya and Gregory, 2013; Mayweg-Paus, Macagno and Kuhn, 2016).

Secondly, the fundamental concepts of Vygotskian theory provide an overarching explanatory framework that helps to inform contemporary approaches to developing practical innovations in L2 teaching and learning. The final chapter 'Thought and Word' of Vygotsky's book 'Thought and Language' (1986) delivers some key aspects of his theory and how it relates to language. It is concerned with cognition and speech as related processes that are a product of the historical development of human consciousness. Vygotsky regarded language as an important mediational tool that makes cognition possible. In other words, cognition does not develop until an individual attempts to use language in a social interaction. His theory is at the heart of a perceived imbalance between the ontological and epistemological approaches in the second/foreign language acquisition theories. Vygotskian advocates would argue that language is a social process whereas studies in the second/foreign language acquisition domain are often attached to cognitive theory, with a focus on increasing the communicative competence of the individual (Želježič, 2017). Influenced by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, some language acquisition theorists created the communicative approach to L2 teaching that emphasises oral communicative competence in harmony with another educational goal such as critical thinking. It can be readily seen that sociocultural theory is compatible with a L2 teaching and learning approach that focuses exclusively on communication, cognition and meaning, rather than form. This view is discussed in Lantolf and Throne's book 'Sociocultural Theory and the Genesis of Second Language' (2006) which describes Vygotsky-inspired research and its application to second and foreign-language developmental processes and pedagogies. From a communicative competence perspective, language teaching and learning does not specifically concentrate on knowledge about rules-governed grammar and structures that needs to be acquired prior to being able to engage in communication. In sociocultural theory, communication is understood to be concerned with enhancing a learner's communicative resources in linguistically mediated social and intellectual activities (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). The aspect of cognition in sociocultural theory

and L2 learning is about much more than just acquiring new signifiers, however. Rather, it centres on "acquiring new conceptual knowledge and/or modifying already existing knowledge as a way of re-mediating one's interaction with the world and with one's own psychological functioning" (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006, p. 5). The sense of 'meaning' in sociocultural theory differs from negotiation of meaning in the formalist approach to language study. It refers to the conceptual meaning created by communities of speakers when engaging in social activities mediated by language.

Finally, sociocultural theory acknowledges the social interactions and mediations that have the potential to inform the process of teaching argumentation skills. Argumentation involves social interactions. Vygotsky recognised the role social interactions play in the formation of human mental development and distinguished lower mental functions from higher mental functions. Lower mental functions are directly influenced by biological and environmental circumstances (e.g. automatically pulling a hand away when touching a hot surface), whereas higher mental functions (e.g. attention, memory, intention, perception, planning, abstraction, rational thinking, problem solving, evaluation) are socially and culturally organised and function under the self-control of a person. The fundamental principle of sociocultural theory is that higher mental functions are the result of the system of social connections and relations (Vygotsky, 1999). The development of higher mental functions are mediated through an integration of auxiliary means into human consciousness. Those culturally constructed and organised means are the outcomes of an engagement in cultural activities (e.g. learning mathematics) in which artefacts (e.g. books, pencils, semicircle rulers, calculators) interact with cultural concepts (e.g. mathematical operations, problem-solving) and the thinking process. In teaching and learning argumentation skills which involves rational thinking, students' higher mental functions can be developed through the process in which psychological and cultural inheritances are interconnected. In argumentation which requires social and intellectual skills, individuals' higher mental functions can be mediated through culturally devised activities, artefacts and the concepts associated with argumentation.

3.3 Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning

Sociocultural theory provides explanations for the development of human higher mental functions. Its roots date back to eighteenth and nineteenth century and the work of prominent German philosophers (particularly that of Kant and Hegel) and the sociological and economic work of Marx and Engels (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985; Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). Initially, much of the framework of sociocultural theory was put forward by Vygotsky and is associated with his approach to learning and development. His investigation of human mental action is widely recognised as providing tremendous insight into the mechanisms around children's learning and mental functioning development. The central tenet of Vygotsky's approach to learning is grounded on the interrelations between human mental functions, social interaction and various forms of mediation (e.g. language). That is, human learning is a social process in which an individual learns through interaction with people and culture. The concept behind the mediational forms is that human learning and mental development does not arise as a consequence of direct actions on the world. Rather, it is mediated by material and symbolic artefacts which are culturally constructed and organised. To work towards my goal of fostering students' argumentation skills, the following sections discuss a series of interrelated concepts that frame my understanding of how argumentation might be learned. This section is organised under three key themes, including (1) intermental and intramental functioning, (2) the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and (3) mediation.

3.3.1 Intermental and intramental processes

The first theme of the Vygotskian approach highlights the significant contribution of social life to human cognitive development. The history of human mental development is an intertwining of two lines, the natural line and the cultural line. The natural line, which is of biological origin, is allied with lower mental functions, while the cultural line is associated with higher mental functions, which are derived from sociocultural engagements (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985). Focusing only on the cultural line, learning takes place in social activities where persons interact with others and artefacts. In the book 'Voices of the Mind: A Sociocultural Approach to Mediated Action'

(Wertsch, 1991), the author discusses the sociocultural history, one of the domains of genetic research extended by Vygotsky and his former student, Luria. They assert that there is a change in the type of mental development, and the transition points of genetic change are associated with the presence of some new forms of mediational means. Lower mental functions are directly determined by stimuli from the environment. Despite being organised on the basis of biologically given functions, higher mental functions are mediated by culturally created auxiliary means such as language. Vygotsky (1978) explained his thoughts about the social origins of mental functioning in the individual through the lens of the general genetic law of cultural development. The development of a child's mental functions emerges in two strands. First, it appears on the social level in which there are interactions between a child and an adult(s) and this stage is categorised as 'interpsychological' or 'intermental functioning' as described in Wertsch's work (1991). The later stage, called 'intrapsychological' or 'intramental functioning', develops on the individual level inside the child. The genetic transitions, called 'internalisation', play a pivotal role in converting intermental functioning into intramental functioning. Internalisation involves the process through which an individual moves from implementing concrete actions in conjunction with the assistance of mediating agents (e.g. human mediator, symbolic mediator) to operate actions mentally without any external assistance (Lantolf, 2000).

Vygotsky depicted an infant's intellectual development through a series of actions. At the beginning, their unsuccessful gestures towards a targeted object and their desires manifest themselves through their striving movements. Their gestures then become mediated by the social environment when their caregivers are able to grasp and appropriately interpret them. This is then followed by a process whereby the meanings of the gestures that have been used for communication with the caregivers that have helped them to achieve their goals begins to be acquired in the child's psychological processes. It is therefore clear that human mental development involves not only psychological but also social dimensions and Vygotsky's approach highlights the significant contributions of social interaction to higher mental functioning in individuals.

Vygotsky (1978) concluded that the internalisation of cultural forms of behaviour consists of a series of transformations:

(a) An operation that initially represents an external sign-using activity (e.g. language) is reconstructed before definitively turning inward;
(b) An interpersonal process is transformed into an intrapersonal one which is directed to voluntary attention, logical memory and the formation of concepts;
(c) The transformation of an interpersonal process into an intrapersonal one is the outcome of a prolonged development. An interpersonal process, as an external form of activity, continues to exist and may change over a long time in associated with the changes in the law governing the activity before being transferred to an intrapersonal one. That is, sign operations that last forever are in the final stage of development while other functions develop further and gradually become inner functions.

In his book 'Thought and Language' (Vygotsky, 1986), Vygotsky explained how intramental functioning and intermental functioning are mediated with the concept of children's egocentric speech. The process of transition from the social activity of the child to a more individualised activity occurs when children are able to master and use linguistic signs both in association with linguistically constituted contexts and non-linguistic contexts (Hickmann, 1985). Vygotsky's (1962) experimental results also confirmed that the function of egocentric speech is identical to that of inner speech because egocentric speech orientates mental activity and connects with the child's thinking. In summary, higher mental functions are organised in dialectical processes, situated in the social processes and culturally transmitted (Vygotsky, 1978; Donato, 1994); the social contexts play a significant role in internalisation.

Vygotsky also viewed articulation as a process in a which a thought is first shaped in inner speech, followed by meanings of words and finally in words (Vygotsky, 1986). His claims provide the notion that a sign system articulated in interpersonal interaction would demonstrate the thought of a person. In this connection, an individual's thinking would be activated and demonstrated with mediational means such as

linguistic signs used for carrying out interpersonal interaction (e.g. conversation, discussion, argumentation and debate). This suggests that an individual's thought can be exemplified through articulation and this involves a process of a continual movement back and forth from word to thought and thought to word.

3.3.2 **The zone of proximal development and scaffolding**

Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) has received considerable attention from educators and researchers across a range of disciplines due to its important contribution to educational psychology. Chapter 6 of 'Mind in Society' (Vygotsky, 1978) outlines the connection between learning and a child's mental development process. He asserts that "human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (1978, p. 88). However, he noted that the developmental process occurs after the learning process (Vygotsky, 1978). This observation forms the key aspect of the ZPD concept which provides a model of the developmental process. Vygotsky defined the ZPD thus:

> It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86)

One aspect of the ZPD is concerned with the assessment of the developmental levels of children. To discover the actual relationship of the developmental process to learning, Vygotsky suggested determining at least two levels of development. The first is called 'actual developmental level' and is the level constituted by already mastered skills. The second level is concerned with the level of developmental potential. In other words, an individual is able to perform the skills with guidance and assistance from another person. In Vygotsky's 'Thought and Language' (1986), he criticised the existing techniques in psychological investigations which measured the level of a child's mental development by making them solve specific standardized problems. The testing indicated only the intramental achievement but failed to determine the future intellectual growth. In contrast to that traditional approach, his ZPD-oriented approach

integrates a more holistic assessment of both actual developmental level and developmental potential.

Another compelling feature of the ZPD is the notion of the provision of guidance and assistance. The above definition of ZPD indicates Vygotsky's view of learning as a social process in which a child uses language to interact with a more knowledgeable person or is in collaboration with a more capable peer. Dialogue and assistance by more capable people, combined with a properly organised learning activity, play a central role in promoting learning and in mediated cognitive growth. In his investigation, centered on the relations between the processes of instruction and the development of mental functions, two children were given problems which were harder than they could solve by themselves (Vygotsky, 1986). They were both provided with some slight assistance. However, the results from the study showed that, by collaborating, only one child could solve the problems. The process of internalization directs the child's developmental achievement in learning. The distance between the child's actual mental development and the level he could achieved with assistance from more capable persons is an indicator of the ZPD.

Vygotsky describes the ZPD as "a tool through which the internal course of development can be understood" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 87). However, Moll (1990, p. 11) emphasizes that Vygotsky never "specified the forms of social assistance to learners that constitute" a ZPD aside from a general reference to "collaboration and direction". Interestingly, in emphasizing the collaborative nature of the development of the ZPD, Panofsky (2003) has argued that a mutual respect and trust may be a requirement for constructive dialogue within a ZPD.

The ZPD has implications for not only assessing the level at which individuals can or cannot perform some tasks independently, but also in providing elucidations for some fundamental issues about learning. According to Ellis (2003), a failure to construct a ZPD ensures that learners are unable to independently perform some tasks which would be possible. On the contrary, a successful ZPD construction, even when internalisation has not occurred, explains why learners are able to perform some tasks when provided with social assistance. The model of the developmental process in a

ZPD highlights the importance of social interactions and scaffolding as instructional strategies for a process of supporting intellectual or skill development. Teachers need to create suitable conditions and control appropriate elements of tasks in order to support learners' achievements in the next level. When a successful outcome has been achieved, teachers gradually reduce their assistance.

Further, scaffolding can support an individual's accomplishment in the tasks they were unable to complete independently. Wertsch (1991) notes that instruction should be tied closely to the level of developmental potential. Moreover, several scholars (e.g. Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976; Wertsch, 1979; Donato, 1994) regard scaffolding as a dialogic process. According to Wertsch (1979), scaffolding involves a dialogically produced intermental process by which learners' internalise knowledge that they have co-constructed with more capable persons. Donato (1994) extended scaffolding frameworks to learner-learner interactions and defined it as 'mutually constructed' assistance by which learners scaffold one another in the same way as more capable adults scaffold less competent learners.

Interestingly, Tharp and Gallimore (1988) devised a four-part ZPD framework with a focus on assisted performance (see Figure 3-1). This model was further updated by Thompson (2013) in his seminal study on the production of a text that was co-constructed between a teacher and a student. In the study, Thompson argues that:

> … the key to understanding [the] development of an individual's psychological and mental functions lies in analysing the social interaction that the individual is involved in during the learning process: that is, the immediate culture of teaching and learning (Thompson, 2013, p. 248).

In the study, Thompson attempts to address certain key research questions, including the mediational role of teachers, or more capable others, in the fostering of a student's writing capability, the method by which students adopt and internalise the cultural tools that assist their psychological development from inner speech to written text, and how the student might take control over their own learning. Adapting the four-part ZPD framework from Tharp and Gallimore (1988), Thompson utilised the model to illustrate how the four stages, or phases, "correspond to development within a learner's ZPD as the student develops, masters, and finally internalises higher-order

psychological processes such as abstract thought or mediated memory" (Thompson, 2013, p. 257).

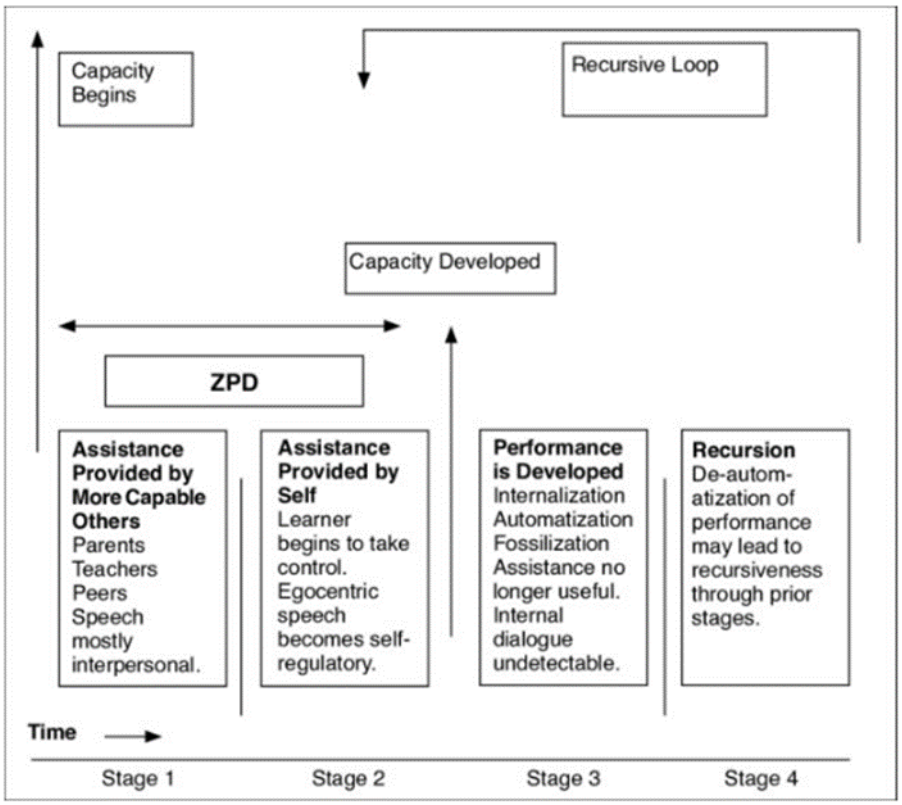


Figure 3-1 Four-part ZPD framework. Excerpted from Tharp and Gallimore (1988, p. 35)
Source: Thompson (2013, p. 257)

In Phase 1, the Assisted Performance phase, the student requires the assistance provided by more capable others, such as an expert or peer collaboration. The student could be described as acquiescent. In Phase 2, the Self -Assisted Performance phase, the student begins to take control of the learning cognitive process. The student is beginning to take agency over their own development. In Phase 3, the Developed Performance phase, internalisation has occurred and assistance is no longer required. Phase 4, the Recursion Phase, could be considered to be distinct from the other three phases. In this phase, the cognitive process may have been disremembered and the student must re-engage through aspects of the previous phases in order to recall.

In this framework, the first three phases illustrate the student's progression through a ZPD from Assisted Performance to Self-Assisted Performance and to the mature level of Developed Performance. Tharp and Gallimore suggested that the Recursion phase occurs so frequently that it represented a separate phase of development. Thompson also suggested that the framework helps teachers to determine what the appropriate form of assistance might be for different types of ZPD. The author continuously emphasised the importance of collaboration for the development of higher mental functions in the writing exercise:

> At the heart of this framework is the assumption that the act of collaboration is central to pupils' developing the higher-order skills of critical thinking of problem-solving. Some or even all of the other elements maybe necessary for pupils to develop the trust or equal power relationship necessary in collaborative writing. In addition, the overall context of students' prior learning histories related to both learning and the act of writing influences the various interactions between the students and other agents of change or classroom contexts. For example, past experience of a teacher's teaching style or attitude towards computers may have a positive or negative influence on the collaboration between learners. Finally, the social and physical contexts of writing are influenced by the physical contexts of the layout of the computer room and the tool usage afforded by computers. (Thompson, 2013, pp. 258-259).

Wood, Burner and Ross (1976) investigated the elements of interactive instruction during the tutorial process on the child's acquisition of problem-solving skills and proposed the techniques of a scaffolding process as follows:

1. Recruitment - enlisting learners' interests and adherence to the requirements in the task;
2. Reduction in degrees of freedom - simplifying the task by reducing the number of constituent acts required for achievement;
3. Direction maintenance - keeping learners in pursuit of the goal;
4. Marking critical features - accentuating particular features of a task that are relevant;
5. Frustration control - decreasing too much dependency on tutors; and
6. Demonstration - modelling solutions to the task.

The above features suggest that scaffolding cannot be viewed only as an interaction between a higher-competent person and a lower-competent person. Rather, this

mediational process requires promoting and maintaining the emotional states of the learners in the task. Vygotsky's account does not disregard the role motives play in the lower or higher level of intellectual development from one state to the next. Indeed, he confirmed that the changes in the structure of the child's behaviour is associated with changes in the child's motivations and needs (Vygotsky, 1978).

3.3.3 **Mediation**

Chapter 4 of 'Mind in Society' (Vygotsky, 1978) clearly presents mediation as a key component of the model to explains how mediated activities can provide learners with avenues for intellectual development. (Wertsch, 1991; Karpov, 2014).
Vygotsky's fundamental claim is that higher mental functions are shaped and mediated by culturally constructed auxiliary means (see Figure 3-2). This means that humans master themselves through external symbolic, cultural systems, rather than being subjugated by and in those auxiliary means (Daniels, 2001). This is because humans reside in an environment which comprises of physical tools or material objects and psychological tools such as signs and symbols that are managed through language.

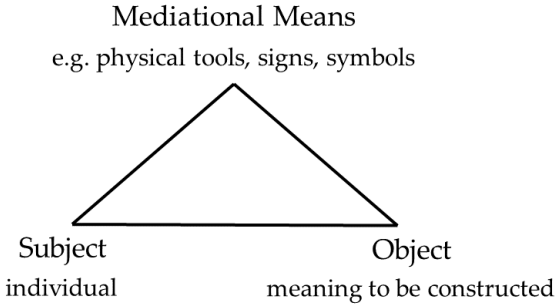


Figure 3-2 Vygotsky's mediational triangle
Source: Adapted from Vygotsky (1978)

Vygotsky clearly marked the differences not only between a physical tool and a sign in mediated activities but also the differences between experiences gained from individuals' interactions with environmental stimuli and those shaped by interactions with symbolic mediators. In Figure 3-3, the simple stimulus-response process is replaced by a complex, mediated act. The figure also visualises the organisation of higher mental functions via a mediated act. In the chapter, Vygotsky explained that an

individual's interaction with auxiliary stimuli creates new forms of a culturally based psychological process and transfers the psychological operation to higher mental functions. The tool is externally oriented and functions as the conductor of human influence on the object. In contrast, a sign is an internally oriented means aimed at mastering oneself. The use of signs, in particular, promotes a behavioural structure that breaks away from biological development and elicits an emergence of a culturally based psychological process.

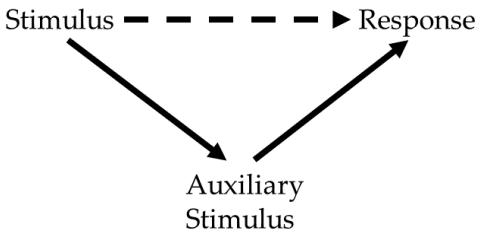


Figure 3-3 Vygotsky's model of mediated act
Sources: Adapted from Vygotsky (1978)

The process of the development of higher mental functions is dependent on the presence of mediational agents in an individual's interaction with the environment. Daniels (2001) explained that human activities can either be direct, natural or unmediated and represent direct subject-object relations or activities mediated through culturally available artefacts (e.g. physical tools, languages, symbols). The author states that "mediators serve as the means by which the individual acts upon and is acted upon by social, cultural and historical factors" (Daniels, 2001, p. 14). Kozulin (2003) extended the Vygotskian theory of mediation and classified agents of mediation as symbolic or human. Symbolic or semiotic mediators include primitive tools (e.g. physical objects) and higher-order symbolic mediators (e.g. signs, symbols, writing, formulae, graphic organisers and other representations of objects). The primitive tools drawn from non-industrialised societies, such as counting fingers, tying knots and casting lots, are described in Vygotsky's work (1978) as the cultural means of human adaption to problem-solving efforts. Counting fingers indicates the realisation of humans at becoming more efficient in counting and quantitative perception while tying knots provides humankind with an auxiliary means of memorising. Beyond the

primitive tools are higher-order symbolic mediators. Mastery of the symbolic mediators and internalisation promotes cognitive development. Focusing on the relationships between symbolic tools and the aspect of mediation, Kozulin (2003) argues that symbolic tools may remain useless unless their meaning is properly mediated to the child. In other words, mediation cannot be properly internalised unless the role of available symbolic mediators is acknowledged. The notion of symbolic mediators in formal education is that mediators of literacy should be systematically and deliberately organised so that it can elicit internalisation. The conclusion from Deloach's (1995) research study advocates the views that the mastery of symbolic mediators involves the ZPD concept and requires proper scaffolding. These views accentuate the prominent role human mediators play in the development of higher mental functions in two sequences. Initially, they direct the form of interactions between people and afterwards they guide the form of internalisation. In short, human mediators play a significant part in establishing interactive situations which encourage learners to perform a complex task which they cannot master independently. In addition, human mediators provide learners with scaffolding in order to facilitate the achievement of their developmental potential. Apart from the psychological nature of development, an individual's mental functioning is a result of their engagement with artefacts, activities or environment with a master's guidance.

Vygotskian theory claims that human mental processes can be understood through the signs and tools that mediated them (Wertsch, 1985). Unlike psychologists who are likely to view a sign as a visual symbol, Vygotsky viewed a sign (e.g. language, word) as an intervening link between intermental and intramental functioning (Davydov and Radzikhovskii, 1985). Psychological tools allow individuals to trace and understand how learners' interactions with these tools in a learning activity is transformed and reflected in their higher mental functions. In his book 'Thought and Language' (Vygotsky, 1986), Vygotsky explained how intramental and intermental functioning are processed through children's egocentric speeches. The process of transition from a social activity to the child's more individualised activity begins as she is able to master and use linguistic signs, both in association with linguistically constituted contexts and non-linguistic contexts (Hickmann, 1985). Vygotsky's (1986) experimental results also

confirmed that the function of egocentric speech is identical to that of inner speech because egocentric speech serves mental orientation and connects with the child's thinking. This identical comparison suggests that an individual's thoughts can be exemplified through articulation and this involves a process of a continual movement back and forth from word to thought and thought to word.

To understand how the signs and the tools used in mediation come into play with mediated actions, it is important to identify the impact of the social, cultural and institutional contexts on those tools. Although Vygotsky's theory has a great influence on this research study, Vygotsky's empirical studies appear to be limited primarily to the understanding of forms of symbolic mediation on the intramental process by analysing their intermental functioning. Wertsch argues:

> In contrast to Vygotsky's conclusions about the forces that shape mediational means – which were usually limited to the dynamics of intermental functioning – the more general claim I would like to pursue is that mediational means emerge in response to a wide range of social forces. (1991, p. 34)

When the focus is attributed to the mediational means, it becomes important to identify what the forces are that influence these agencies that play a role in shaping intermental and intramental functioning. The theoretical work of James V. Wertsch (1985; 1991), which integrates certain aspects of Vygotsky's theory, provides some insights into the relationship between the cultural, historical and institutional settings and human mental processes. Three general perspectives of mediational means have been addressed in Wertsch's book 'Voices of the Mind' (1991). First, individuals' actions are basically shaped by the mediational means they employ. Secondly, the power of mediational means in organising actions is frequently not recognised consciously by those who employ them. This contributes to the concept that physical and psychological tools are the products of natural or necessary factors, rather than any distinct sociocultural forces. Lastly, mediational means are the products of cultural, historical, and institutional forces which may have little connection to the local settings in which they are employed. They shape the local settings in ways that might not be regarded as suitable with regard to intermental or intramental functioning. In short, Wertsch's work concentrates on the way cultural, historical and institutional contexts

influence and shape mediational means - especially language - and considers how mediational means are accounted for in an individual's actions.

3.4 Sociocultural theory application in the teaching of argumentation

The main goal in carrying out this research study is to develop the pedagogical techniques that explicitly foster argumentation skills for the English oral communication classroom at a university in Thailand and to generate the pedagogical approaches for implementing debate in EFL classrooms. My approach in developing an appropriate form of mediation is influenced by the Vygotskian theory of teaching and learning. Following Vygotsky's theory, an individual's thinking is a "culturally mediated social process of communication" (Daniels, 2001, p. 50). This suggests that thinking and reasoning is likely to be the developmental outcome of social practices, rather than pure biological maturation. The premise that social interaction contributes to the mental development of an individual and that human learning is a social process in which an individual learns through interaction with people and culture have implications in this research study. In relation to the focus of this research study, then, we can derive the following key conceptual point:

An individual's argumentation skills, which can be characterised as a higher mental functions, would emerge in an engagement in interpersonal and intrapersonal interactions.

The way argumentation is viewed in this research study is likely to be aligned with Vygotsky's notion of a close connection between a social activity of speaking and an active process of thinking (Daniels, 2001). Vygotsky asserted that intermental action provides the key for an analysis of the emergence of intramental actions. The higher mental functions in an individual can also be understood by taking into account the tools or signs that mediate them (Wertsch, 1985, 1991). In this regard, interpersonal interaction and mediational tools appear to be the interrelated keys for activating an individual's thinking and reasoning process. The observation of the outcomes from using mediational tools while engaging in interpersonal interaction appears to be an approach to understand an individual's capacity for argumentation skills.

The presence of appropriate mediational means is important for the process of internalising knowledge and the skills of argumentation. In Wertsch's writings (1985) an intermental process is defined as the engagement in social interactions of small groups (frequently dyads) of individuals. Wertsch (1991, p. 47) asserts that "no less than the action of an individual, the action of a dyad or small group is a component in the social system". In line with his view, a dialogic discourse, such as debate, has a significant potential to create an environment which allows the students to fully perform in social interaction. This type of discourse will also allow the researcher to observe the argumentation skills of the students and the different worldviews they bring with them. Debate, which might be a new experience for the students, is viewed as the level of potential development. Drawing upon the ZPD, the learning process can facilitate the development of argumentation skills. The mediational means such as scaffolding activities and learning materials are vital for the learning process. Additionally, the interaction between the researcher and the students while operationalising those means is necessary for assisting the students in making meanings from the mediated activities. The ability of what Vygotsky referred to as 'the more able peer', presumably a student working at a more advanced level of development, is also key for the ZPD. After the students make meaning of their interactions with the mediational means in the scaffolding activities and internalise argumentation skills, the assistance would be removed and the students will perform debate on their own.

As discussed in Section 3.3.3, social interaction and human mental processes are dependent on certain forms of mediation such as linguistic signs. In this vein, there will also be an association between teacher-student and student-student interactions, the students' mastery of argumentation knowledge and skills and the mediational means, (e.g. the patterns of argument, worksheets, the scaffolding tasks, debate and, in particular, signs). Wertsch's claim that mediation means are shaped by cultural, historical and institutional contexts drew my attention to exploring in what way those contexts influence the emergence of mediational means and in what way the mediated actions are transformed and reflected in the students' higher mental functions. It is also important to investigate in what way the associated cultural traditions the students

hold and bring with them shape their thoughts and influence their mediated actions in the learning activity.

3.5 **Research questions**

As indicated in Chapter 1, the objective of this research study is to develop the pedagogical techniques that explicitly foster argumentation skills for the English oral communication classroom at a university in Thailand and to generate the pedagogical approaches for implementing debate to foster critical thinking and speaking skills in EFL classrooms. The systematic interconnection among the key aspects of Vygotsky's approach to learning and development has a major contribution in forming the research questions. Considering his work, this research study retains a central notion that learners' higher mental functions are the result of their interaction with mediational means. That is, the physical and psychological tools that learners interact with are situated within the social world and they were important for the acquisition process. It is clear that a mediational means is a significant element for equipping students with the skills in thinking and reasoning in this research study. Recognising the relationships between human higher mental functions, social processes and mediational means, the concept of the ZPD and scaffolding, the first research question is:

RQ1: What sort of mediational tool can provide scaffolding to Thai students to make arguments in an English communication classroom at a university in Thailand?

As discussed in Chapter 1, Thai students are likely to have a limited exposure to the explicit learning of critical thinking in EFL classrooms. Designing lessons and activities to develop students' critical thinking in an EFL classroom appears to be challenging for Thai teachers, especially those who have little experience and lack confidence in teaching critical thinking. In order to understand how any physical and psychological tools might engage with the students' actions in the learning activity, I should be able to identify the impact of socially, culturally and institutionally situated forms on those tools. In this regard, I drew upon Wertsch's theoretical work to frame another research question. His account emphasises the influence of historical, cultural and institutional

contexts on the emergence of mediational means that also shape mediated actions. With this in mind, RQ2 is intended to investigate the historical, cultural and social contexts Thai students are experiencing in EFL classrooms and how those contexts shape their perspectives on the mediational means they interact with during the learning activity. Therefore, this research study is also driven by the following research question:

RQ2: How do the social and cultural practices previously experienced by the participants shape their predispositions to engage in argumentative debates in university EFL classes?

I also wish to generate a better understanding of the issues around cultivating argumentation skills in the EFL classrooms in Thailand and for the learning of this study to have a wider benefit and broader pedagogical implications in ELT in other similar contexts. This objective has led to the following research question:

RQ3: What principles for teaching and learning might be derived from this research study to support the teaching and learning of argumentation in EFL Oral Communication class in the Thai higher educational context?

Chapter 4 Research methodology

4.1 Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methodology for this research study in accordance with the epistemological understanding and research focus presented in the previous chapters. This chapter also explains the rationale for adopting the specific methodological approach employed in this research study, namely design-based research (DBR). To begin with, Section 4.2 presents the justification for DBR as an appropriate research approach to address research questions 1 (RQ1) and 3 (RQ3). This initial section also clarifies my choice regarding research location and participant selection, any ethical considerations, the design process, the methods of data collection and my research position with regard to DBR. Section 4.3 explains the research design for research question 2 (RQ2) and begins with a justification for the research interview as the method of choice for data collection, followed by a discussion of my position in the interview. Next, in Section 4.4, the methods of data analysis for both the fieldnotes and interview data are discussed. The methodological decision is interspersed with discussions concerning trustworthiness throughout Sections 4.2 and 4.3.

4.2 Research design for RQ1 & RQ3: How to scaffold argumentation skills

RQ1: What sort of mediational tool can provide scaffolding to Thai students to make arguments in an English communication classroom at a university in Thailand?

The key point for considering a research approach to answering RQ1 is that it should allow the investigator to create and investigate mediational tools for explicitly fostering argumentation skills in the EFL classroom. Additionally, the findings should contribute to the generation of key principles of the teaching and learning of argumentation skills in the classroom. Amongst available research approaches, methods in design-based research (DBR) have the potential to enable the investigator to effectively arrive at a solution for this research problem. Design-based research is a research approach that draws upon an iterative design to develop the knowledge and theory necessary for improving educational practices in a local context. Its aim matches my position as a practitioner and a researcher because it allows a researcher to use her

existing knowledge and experience to design the template to formulate a solution, while also allowing for re-evaluation and redesign. The characteristics of DBR and the decision to choose DBR for this research study are articulated in the following sections.

4.2.1 **What is design-based research?**

Design-based research has been used in a wide range of educational settings, including face-to-face classroom settings, distance learning settings, blended learning settings and workplace settings (Zheng, 2015). It is a practical research methodology that emphasises the development of design principles to guide, inform and improve both practice and research in educational settings (Anderson and Shattuck, 2012).

The concept of DBR can be traced back to the work of Ann Brown (1992), who is widely acknowledged as an early developer of the method (Barab and Squire, 2004); (Cotton, Lockyer and Brickell, 2009; Anderson and Shattuck, 2012). Brown (1992) conducted an intervention research, designed to inform teaching and learning practice while examining how and why interventions can migrate from experimental classrooms to ordinary classrooms. Her intention was to re-engineer and transform classrooms from "academic knowledge factories" (Brown, 1992, p. 174) to a learning environment in which students are in charge of their own knowledge acquisition. Brown (1992) concluded that the DBR process can successfully facilitate reflective practice amongst peers, teachers and researchers.

4.2.2 **Characteristics of design-based research**

There are connections between the characteristics of DBR and Vygotsky's sociocultural approach in several aspects, such as the impact of social interaction on learning and understanding, the role of mediational means in learning and the importance of the researchers' reflection on their interactions with mediational means and learners' mediated actions. The four characteristics which identify a study as having the quality of DBR have been summarised by a number of scholars (e.g. The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003; Anderson and Shattuck, 2012; Barab and Squire, 2004). The characteristics include a focus upon designing and examining interventions; the incorporation of multiple iterations; an authentic partnership between researcher and

practitioner and the generation of new theories of learning or practical design principles.

4.2.2.1 Focusing on designing and examining interventions

The term 'designing' refers to the systematic creation of plans. The objective of designing is to devise optimal tools to attain the desired goals (Reigeluth, 1983). In this particular study, the characteristics of DBR allow me to design and implement mediational tools (e.g. scaffolding activities, artefacts and types of evaluation) in order to develop effective mediators to facilitate the process of learning. The interventions are not just simply designed and tested as in empirical or predictive research, but these interventions should exemplify theoretical claims about teaching and learning and reflect an overall understanding of the relationships among theory, designed tools, and practice (The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003). Figure 4-1 illustrates the differences between an empirical research study and a study inspired by DBR. Creating an intervention and a set of principles for practice is the outcome of an evaluation of a local context, rather than addressing theory more broadly conceived. Moreover, the identification of various problems that arise in this particular context allows the researchers to investigate approaches which deal with those problems or improve certain practice. Anderson and Shattuck (2012) also suggest deliberate documentation of possible problems and limitations involved in the design and implementation of interventions. In addition, the identification of contingencies around the designed interventions is also crucial for a successful plan to improve the interventions.

4.2.2.2 Incorporating multiple iterations

One of the strengths of DBR is that it focuses on activities that are undertaken prior to, during and after the design. Importantly, the multiple cyclic processes of investigation provide room for researchers to test and refine interventions. Furthermore, in contrast to empirical or predictive research, DBR allows me to evaluate and refine the prototype throughout the process. Therefore, the DBR model is more appropriate for the ongoing testing and refinement of solutions in practice, rather than designing experiments to test hypotheses and refine a given theory. The model includes four main distinct

phases (Reeves, 2000; Herrington *et al.*, 2007; Amiel and Reeves, 2008); the analysis of a practical problem by researchers and practitioners, the development of solutions within a theoretical framework and finally, the evaluation and testing of solutions in practice and documentation and reflection in order to produce design principles.

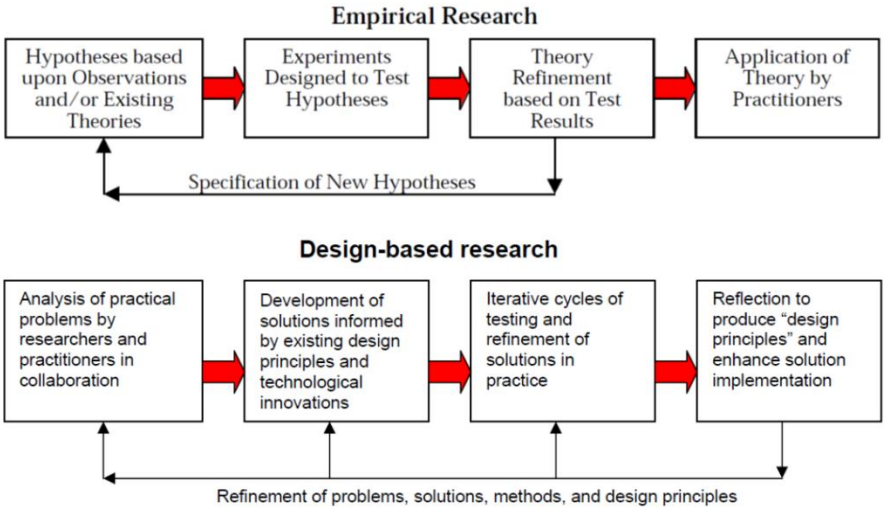


Figure 4-1 Differences between empirical research study and study inspired by DBR
Source: Adapted from Reeves (2000) and Amiel and Reeves (2008)

Two or more cycles of testing and evaluating solutions for practice promote the reliability of research claims (The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003). However, multiple cycles of iterations are recognised to be challenging to researchers in maintaining the interest and commitment of participants. In addition, for research projects which involve a number of participants, each cyclic operation requires both time and a budget. When reliability in developing the principles and theories depends upon the cycles of testing along with the analysis and refinement of interventions, the question remains for researchers to decide when the number of cycles they have conducted is sufficient for producing reliable findings and knowledge claims. Given this consideration, the decision about the number of cyclic iterations which were carried out in this research was made based upon time and budget constraints, in addition to the participants' availability. Despite these factors, the process of data collection in the three cyclic iterations successfully generated research findings which were reliable enough for the articulation of knowledge claims. As addressed in

Chapter 1, Section 1.9, the main aims of this research are to develop pedagogical techniques for fostering argumentation skills and to generate a better understanding of the pedagogical practices involved in implementing debate activities in an English oral communication classroom at a Thai university. It is clear that multiple cyclic iterations were not initially intended for use in devising the most effective mediational tool for explicitly fostering argumentation skills in a local context. Another point that researchers should be concerned with is that when carrying out a number of cyclic iterations, one needs to consider how to maintain both the interest and engagement of participants in the data collection process.

4.2.2.3 Being situated either in a naturalistic context or laboratory setting

A DBR project can be conducted either in a naturalistic context (as a collaboration between researchers and local teachers throughout the entire research process), or in a laboratory setting. With regard to 'naturalistic contexts', DBR aims to build a strong connection between educational research and real world problems (Amiel and Reeves, 2008). This salient characteristic allowed me to utilise my teacher role in terms of the local context, in this research. As a teacher myself and researcher—I am effectively collaborating 'with myself'—I have built phases of reflection into the process so that I can shift between both my teacher and my researcher roles respectively. I drew upon my five-year experience in teaching EFL at a Thai university when adumbrating my reflections on practical issues with regards development of the English speaking and critical thinking skills of Thai EFL students at the local context; focusing on speaking courses available in the curriculum. In my reflection, I identified the need to revise the course content and teaching materials of English Oral Communication in order for it to become correspondent to formal educational policy. The course itself could be no longer aimed at only developing oral communicative competence. Rather, it needs to be carefully re-designed in order to cultivate the apposite critical thinking skills.

Having utilised the modified DBR approach, the data collection was mainly carried out in controlled conditions. However, this research required my personal reflection on a very particular phenomenon, in a naturalistic context in order to develop sound interventions. In addition, controlled conditions allowed me to control the

interventions to be tested in multiple cycles. The outcomes of the interventions would reflect the situations in a local context. Furthermore, the studies conducted in real educational contexts are likely to produce results which contribute to meaningful changes in practice in at least the context within which DBR studies are carried out (Anderson and Shattuck, 2012). However, Brown (1992) argues that in DBR, theoretical advancement can be made in both classroom and laboratory settings. Her personal research strategy, which revolves around switching back and forth between laboratory and classroom settings, has the potential to generate a profound understanding of a particular phenomenon and disseminate knowledge in 'real-world' contexts. Barab and Squire (2004) also highlighted that researchers realised that simply observing what takes place in the classroom alone could not provide them with a complete understanding. They recognised the need to create technical tools, curricula and, in particular, learning theories, to help them systematically understand how learning is developed. The design is usually developed in accordance with problem analysis within a particularised local context. Following these scholars' analyses, I focused on creating laboratory spaces for testing what I had developed, because of the very early stage nature of those interventions, their potentially significant disruption to teaching practice—and my desire to try a novel way of working with teachers.

4.2.2.4 Generating new theories of learning - or practical design principles

The key aim of the final phase of the DBR model is to generate a set of principles for effective teaching and learning in naturalistic settings (Barab and Squire, 2004; Anderson and Shattuck, 2012). Apparently, there are commonalities between action research and DBR in terms of the multiple roles of researchers, interventions, cycle process and reflection (Bakker and Van Eerde, 2013; Shattuck and Anderson, 2013). However, the element of difference between DBR and action research led to my choice of adopting the DBR approach in my research design, rather than employing straight action research. First, structural design is a requirement of DBR, while it is optional in action research. Secondly, DBR prioritises the generating of instructional principles or theoretical insights, while action research focuses on actions and the empirical improvement of a situation (Bakker and Van Eerde, 2013). As described in Section 1.9,

the two main aims of my research include the design of instructional techniques for the explicit teaching of argumentation skills in an EFL oral communication classroom at a Thai university. The second aim involves generating sound pedagogical approaches and practices for implementing debate in EFL classrooms**.**

It should be noted that principles and theories generated in DBR need not be restricted to one context nor are they necessarily generalisable to all contexts. DBR places values on the wider theoretical knowledge of the field that effectively reflect the contexts in which they are generated or refined so that they are applicable in other similar contexts (Barab and Squire, 2004). Given my specific interest in the Thai context, this seemed an important orientation and aim for me to work with—recognising that my claims are not likely to be universal but may yet have relevance beyond my specific classroom setting. Although the designed principles and theories generated in my research are significant and can be effectively transferred to real educational settings, they are likely to be more applicable to a single EFL context in Thailand (or other similar contexts), rather than across all contexts. Anderson and Shattuck (2012) warn that researchers and local practitioners need to be aware of generalisability across all learning circumstances. That is, the design principles might provide different degrees of effectiveness depending on each learning circumstance and context.

4.2.3 **Research location and participants**

This research was intended to gather data from a group of Thai students who were enrolled into the BA in an EFL programme at a university in the north of Thailand where I work as a full-time English teacher. It incorporated 'convenience sampling' as the technique for identification of members of the sample group. At the beginning, the selection was related to the paramount objective of the research which is to develop pedagogical tools that encourage the students to debate ideas constructively in an English oral communication course at a Thai university. The pre-selection of the cohort took place based upon educational background to match the tasks performed in the investigation. The participants were intended to be a group of Thai undergraduates whose English language proficiency enables them to readily deal with the tasks presented. Secondly, the feasibility of conducting this research study was impacted by

the accessibility that I have to certain stakeholders. For example, data collection initially required the collaboration of a Thai university to allow access to the cohort. As a full-time English lecturer at the university, I approached the gatekeepers and co-opted the assistance of co-workers to invite the students to participate in this research project. Ease of accessibility, therefore, played a major role. This choice of cohort was also informed by the desire that the research outcomes had a direct contribution in developing mediational tools for teaching argumentation and also generating principles for integrating debate in an EFL speaking classroom; not only in the local context—but also in other similar contexts.

The targeted participants were third-year students. This target group was expected to have already taken all the fundamental English and English oral communication courses offered in the first and the second years of their studies (see Appendix 1). With their communicative skills, prior knowledge and previous experiences, it was presumed that they would be able to deal with this level of debate in English. Nevertheless, debate creates a considerable challenge for these students because it requires multiple-skill components. These constitute not only reading skills in English for the purposes of processing researched materials and speaking skills for addressing thoughts and persuading others, but also the requisite critical thinking skills. Trapp et al. (2005) highlight that debate in L2 requires not only that the speakers translate and speak in a different language, but also that they think, process and persuade others in L2.

The way to recruit the targeted students was due to their willingness to volunteer in this research project, rather than prioritising their Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), as received from the English-speaking courses overall. The CGPA from the speaking courses alone would be unlikely to reflect the levels of English proficiency and knowledge of the participants. Moreover, research evidence on correlations between English proficiency and critical thinking capacity suggests that high levels of English language proficiency alone do not always ensure a competent performance in thinking and reasoning. However, Rashid and Hashim's (2008) research indicated that there were some positive correlations between critical thinking capacity and the

English language proficiency of Malaysian undergraduates. Nevertheless, the researchers noted that there were students with substantive English proficiency who performed poorly in their abilities to exercise their thinking and reasoning skills. Accordingly, I would contend that there has been offered no extant evidence which strongly indicates that a high level of English proficiency correlates with performance in argumentation in L2 learners.

The procedure to recruit the participants was as follows:

A cover letter asking for permission to conduct the present research study, along with other relevant documents, were sent to the Head of the Department of English at a Thai university in the middle of August 2016, before Semester 2 began in October 2016 (see Appendices 2, 3 and 4).

After receiving permission from the Department, the co-workers who advised the third-year students were asked for their cooperation in sequestering the emails of relevant students. This was the first channel used to approach the targeted students.

A few weeks after sending emails to the students, I received only a few responses from the students. I realised that I needed to directly approach the students in person at the research site in the first week of the semester. I asked the co-workers for their permission to visit their classes to invite more students to participate in this research study. Having conversations with the students presented the opportunity to provide them with information regarding the research procedures in more details and to ensure their right of participation or withdrawal, confidentiality and anonymity. With this approach, I received many immediate responses from the students and could recruit a greater number of volunteers. It was important to ensure that the students were aware that they could withdraw from the process at any time. Furthermore, some students might have been coerced into the project by their teachers; therefore, I reminded them during conversations of their right to voluntarily disengage from the process at any time.

Amongst the 440 undergraduates enrolled upon the programme, there were exactly one hundred and twenty-four third-year students at the time of this study. Forty-two

students (approximately 34% of the targeted students), volunteered to participate in the research study. Four participants were randomly chosen from the group of forty-two students to be in the second pilot study (the second iteration). Before participating in this research study, the majority of students had never engaged in any debate or debate-like activity in Thai or English. However, all of them seemed to be familiar with small group or whole class discussions in English. Before engaging in the data collection session, thirty-six participants were randomly paired up and six participants were asked to be paired up with their close friends. Similar tasks were assigned to all of the paired participants, both in the second pilot study (the second iteration) and the main study (the third iteration). In addition to the tasks, the participants were interviewed individually. The process of data collection was carried out during the week between 5.30 to 8.30 pm at a bookable group study room at the central library of the university.

4.2.3.1 The approach to pairing participants

There are valid reasons for the random assignment of the participants into pairs, rather than by considering the levels of their English language proficiency. First, the objective of the current study is to create an environment in which the participants are encouraged to fully engage in using their argumentation skills and advancing their current standpoints, rather than in simply evaluating their English language proficiency. It should be noted that the tasks the participants performed in this study involved interactions between the participants and focused on *meaning* rather than *form*. This approach is supported by several scholars (see Nunan, 1989; Lee, 2000; Bygate, Skehan and Swain, 2001) who confirm the efficacy of this approach. Secondly, in terms of management, this research study prioritised random selection to reduce the potential for any of the participants to feel isolated if they were unable to find their partners.

As previously mentioned, three out of twenty-one pairs asked to be grouped with their close friends, as they indicated that they felt uncomfortable in working with other participants that they did not know well. This was allowed as an assessment of the levels of English language proficiency of the participants or a comparison between the

abilities of the high and low English achieving students was not the objective of this research study. Moreover, the participants volunteered to take part in this research study. Considering the scope of the research study, this self-selection should not be party to a condition which would exclude these participants from the data collection process. It was also considered that this could also be an opportunity to explore the perspectives of these participants with regards their preference to work with their close friends, rather than being randomly paired with other students. Random partnering appeared to be unproblematic for the rest of the participants, as none of them asked to change their partners after having been informed about the self-selecting cohort.

4.2.4 **Ethical consideration**

The cohort of concern in this research were third-year students of the EFL programme at a university in the North of Thailand. The research was carried out under the guidelines of the British Educational Research Association or BERA (2011) and the British Economics and Social Research Council or ESRC (2015). The ethical issues that I thought through included the impact of my role as teacher upon the participating students, planning the data collection process in accordance with the University's academic calendar, remuneration payment, pairing up the participants and also research site access. At the beginning of the research, my professional status as lecturer made me think through the way I should introduce myself to the targeted students. I chose to introduce myself as a researcher from the University of Bristol, rather than as a lecturer on the EFL programme of the university. In addition, due to Thailand's traditional culture of respect to older people and its imbalanced teacher-student power relations, I was concerned over the students thinking that taking part in the research was obligatory and that they were anticipated to perform well in order to meet my expectations. When I approached the prospective students, I emphasised to the students that this research was absolutely voluntary and they had the right to engage or withdraw from the investigative process at any time if they were to reach the physical or mental state where they could no longer participate. Importantly, the students were assured that their involvement or withdrawal from the data collection process, their interview data and their overall performance in the tasks would have no impact on their study programme; in either a pastoral or academic sense. Further, I

assured them that their personal information and answers would be kept confidential and anonymous—thus they would not be shared with other lecturers or staff. All of the above ethical considerations are clearly written on the Information Sheet, which detailed the research topic, objectives, methods, procedures, intended uses of the findings and the bio-information about the researcher (see Appendix 3); and also the Consent Form (see Appendix 4).

Secondly, I consulted the academic calendar of the university in order to plan my data collection process, which needed to be suitable for the cohort's availability. The data collection process, which was situated in a laboratory setting, needed to avoid unnecessary disruption of their regular study routines. The data collection took place outside class periods, in the afternoon, while the process of applying the scaffolding tasks until the completion of debates took approximately three hours. For this reason, I took the safety and well-being of the participants into consideration by carrying out each session at a group study room at the central library of the university. Due to the service hours of the university's main library and the contingent availability of the participants, I had to occasionally postpone the interviews for a day, which was for health and safety reasons. I was also concerned that the tasks they had previously performed might make them feel exhausted and consequently not attentive enough to provide in-depth answers during their interviews.

With regard to remuneration, the cohort received 120 Baht (equivalent to 3 GBP) in petty cash and refreshments for their participation in order to help encourage them to join the research study. My initial concern was that there would not be enough participants to complete the research project. Collins, Bronte-Tinkew, and Burkhauser (2008) have previously stated that financial incentives encourage teens to participate in research programmes. Indeed, the data collection process required the participants' commitment and contribution, because each session of the process took, approximately, four hours. I therefore realised that providing the cohort with refreshments and petty cash at that rate was more than appropriate. However, the incentives as such might at the same time put extra pressure on the cohort. That is, they might think that this research project anticipated their strongest commitment, best

performance and more significantly, favourable opinions in the interviews. It was also possible that with these higher incentives, the cohort might feel more reluctant to withdraw from the research study, despite having been informed of their right to withdraw from the research project at any time.

Pairing up the participants was one of my major ethical concerns. Prior to the data collection process, the participating students were randomly paired up. I then informed them of the names of their interlocutors. I regarded the importance of providing the cohort with as much information as possible about this research project, in particular the data collection procedure and their debate interlocutors. Therefore, I informed them individually who their interlocutors were. However, the students who felt uncomfortable working with random interlocutors and preferred self-selection, were allowed to do so.

Finally, I deliberately thought through how I approached the Department of English and my co-workers. Rather than taking it for granted that I could use my role as a lecturer on the EFL programme to easily access the research site, I processed documents, including a cover letter, information sheet and GSoE Research Ethics Form (see Appendices 2, 3 and 5), to ask for the permission of the Department of English to carry out the data collection process. After obtaining the said permission, I approached my co-workers, who supervise third-year students, for their cooperation in disseminating the e-mails addressed to the students under their supervision. I chose to ask my co-workers about the email addresses of the targeted students and I wrote the students individual emails with the attached detailed information about the research project (see Appendix 3), in order to invite them to join the data collection process. When asking for assistance from my co-workers, in both asking for the students' email addresses and when visiting their classrooms to verbally invite more students, I seriously took into account the availability of my co-workers and made sure that they felt comfortable providing me with their assistance. Therefore, my request did not require much of their time and effort, and the data collection of my research did not avoid disruption of normal classroom activities.

The guidelines provided by the British Educational Research Association or BERA (2011) and the British Economics and Social Research Council or ESRC (2015) with regard to ethical considerations for individuals and their participation in research studies were integrated into the GSoE Research Ethics Form (see Appendix 5). Additionally, the Ethics Outline Application for my research project was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Bristol. The ethical issues discussed in the document included the process of obtaining permission to recruit the targeted students and carry out the data collection process at the research site, as well as asking for the participants' consent. The students' right of participation and withdrawal from the investigative process and the data protection scheme (e.g. confidentiality, anonymity, data storage) were also addressed. Along with the ethics form, the ethical issues were also verbally addressed in conversations with the targeted students in the classrooms and with the volunteers prior to the investigative process.

4.2.5 **Overview of the data collection process for RQ1 and RQ3**

An overview of the data collection process, including the research questions and methods of data collection, is presented diagrammatically in Figure 4-2.

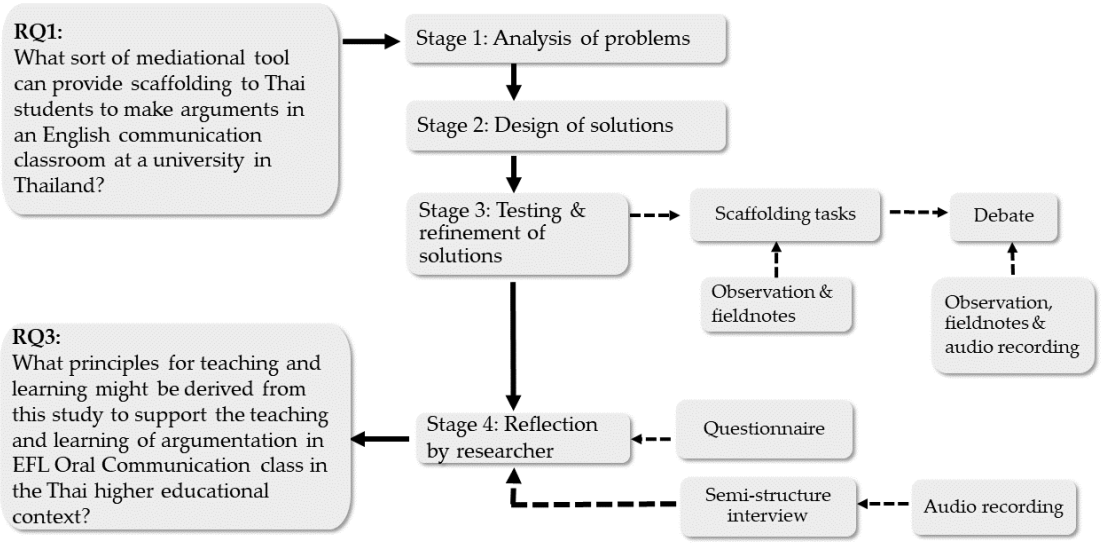


Figure 4-2 Overview of the data collection process for RQ1 and RQ3

The DBR model contributed to setting out the process of this research study. Accordingly, there are four stages, including (1) analysis of problems, (2) design of solutions, (3) testing and refinement of solutions and (4) reflection, which are the key elements for designing mediational tools to scaffold argumentation skills.

After identifying practical problems in Stage 1 and developing interventions in Stage 2, the interventions were tested in Stage 3, in which observations were also conducted for gathering qualitative data. After testing the interventions in three cycles, the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were carried out in order to collect feedback from the participants about their experience in the debate and scaffolding tasks. The final stage required my reflection in order to produce sound design principles for the teaching and learning of argumentation in an EFL Oral Communication class in the Thai higher educational context. My response to the third research question required an analytical process, in which the qualitative data from the observations and the interviews was analysed to generate themes and data for the Likert scale questionnaires, which were analysed with statistics. The themes and significant findings were evaluated with the focus on the extent to which the developed mediational tools for the explicit teaching of argumentation, met the pre-determined aims of the research. This stage led to the creation of design principles which provided recommendations for an improvement in the implementation of argumentation in an English Oral communication class in the Thai higher educational context. The process of data analysis is later illustrated in more detail in Section 4.4.

4.2.6 **The design process for RQ1**

To create a mediational tool to scaffold argumentation skills, the design process was structured around four major stages by adapting the models demonstrated in the work of Amiel and Reeves (2008). Figure 4-3 shows the stages and actions in DBR, juxtaposed with the mapping of these in this research.

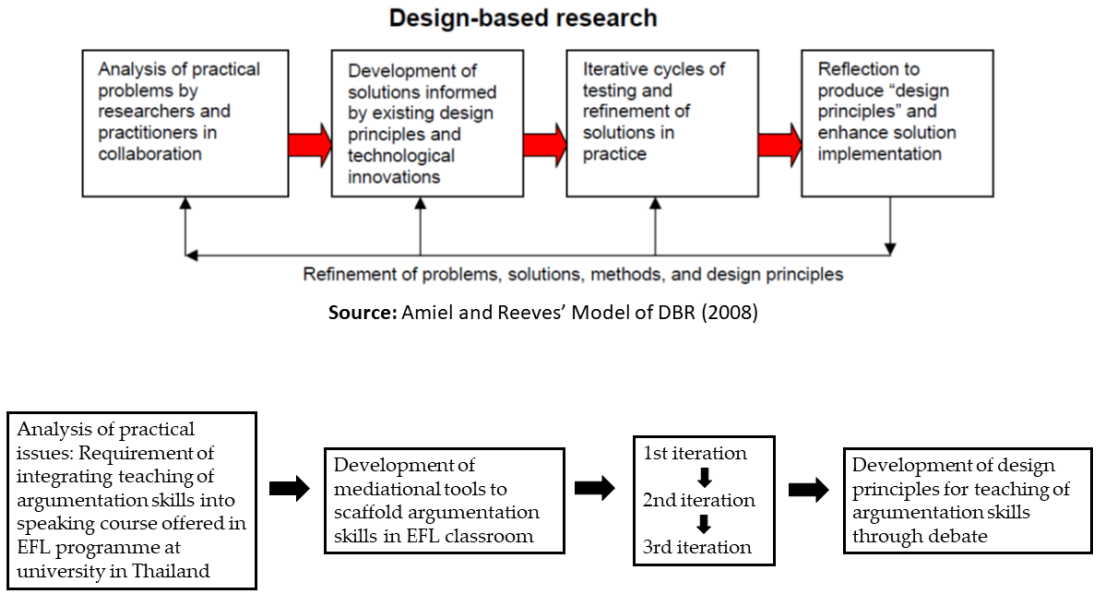


Figure 4-3 Outline of how Amiel and Reeves' (2008) model of DBR was adapted in this research

A detailed breakdown of the four major stages shown in Figure 4-3 is provided as following:

4.2.6.1 Stage 1: Analysis of problems

The first stage in the model involves an initial analysis to identify practical problems associated with teaching and learning. This should be done in close collaboration between researchers and research participants (e.g. local practitioners, students). The first stage emphasises the value of human interaction. Drawing upon sociocultural theory, the interaction between the researcher and the participants should highlight the practical problems about teaching and learning in the EFL classrooms and this would be translated into the researcher's understanding of the challenges. However, the time and budget constraints in this research study were unlikely to allow me to conduct a detailed analysis of the practical problems at the research site in close collaboration with my co-workers and the participants, as suggested in the original model. Nevertheless, my teaching experience in the EFL programme at the university enabled me to initially identify any practical problems, and these were the basis for the decision to engage my PhD study in the first place (see Chapter 1). To implement Stage 1, I

drew upon my dual roles in this research study, both as a researcher who investigated the issues and as a lecturer with five years of experience at the Department of English at the university in Thailand. My teaching experience provided a comprehensive overview of the curriculum and the classroom environment of the research site. This arose from the reflection process, in which I interacted with the various artefacts, such as curriculum, literature and the course syllabuses offered in the EFL programme. I began the analysis by reviewing the relevant literature to understand the theoretical background of argumentation and rhetoric and the integration of debate as a pedagogical tool and these assisted me in identifying an approach to debate in the EFL context. This was further crystallised into the context of an EFL classroom in higher education in Thailand. The needs analysis came from reviewing the syllabuses offered for the undergraduates of the programme. Stage 1 concluded with an articulation of the problems and gaps found from the review of literature and relevant documents, while drawing upon my teaching experience in the local context.

4.2.6.2 Stage 2: Design of solutions

In Stage 2, DBR researchers identified possible solutions to support local practitioners and proposed a prototype. The design of interventions in this research study was oriented towards the view that the students' interactions with the mediational means specifically provided in this research study should facilitate the acquisition of sound argumentation skills. To explain, an intermental process, which takes place as a student interacts with the mediating agents, should be transformed to an intramental one. Additionally, in the context of this research study, the theoretical concept of the ZPD informed the requirement of providing scaffolding tools for the acquisition of argumentation skills. Ellis (2003) suggests that task-based learning must be structured in a such a way that it poses an appropriate challenge for learners to perform functions and use language that enables them to dynamically construct ZPDs. The design of the drafted interventions was underpinned by the theoretical foundation of argumentation and the task-based learning approach.

4.2.6.3 Stage 3: The testing and refinement of solutions

Stage 3 addresses the implementation of the proposed interventions. Different types of data collection methods were carried out while the participants were performing the series of tasks. However, a single implementation was unlikely to be sufficient to gather enough evidence to address the effectiveness of the intervention (Herrington *et al.*, 2007). Although continued refinement of interventions entails valid design principles and reliable knowledge claims, which would be advantageous for further implementation in the real EFL classroom, I determined that time and research budget constraints only allowed for the operation of the cyclic iterations in two small-scaled pilot studies and an actual prototype at the research site.

First iteration

The first iteration, regarded as a pilot study, was carried out in Bristol with two participants who were Thai postgraduates. One participant had no direct experience in conventional debate. The other had some limited exposure to in-class debate activity when he was an undergraduate. The reason for not conducting the first iteration with Thai EFL undergraduates at the research site was due to the time constraints. I needed to consult the university academic calendar and be cognisant that the process of data collection should be done within a semester which lasted, approximately, four months. Therefore, it was necessary to develop the initial interventions, conduct the testing and refine them prior to arriving at the research site in Thailand. This was to ensure that those interventions would be advanced enough for testing in the second and third iterations. The pilot participants engaged in the series of tasks and were given opportunities to fully provide feedback on the tasks. Observation and note taking was carried out during their feedback, and debate was audio recorded. The data set was used to inform the refinement of the interventions for the second iteration.

Second iteration

The second iteration took place at the research site at the university in Thailand, a week prior to the third iteration. After forty-two undergraduates had confirmed their participation in the data collection process, four participants were randomly chosen

from the group to take part in the second pilot study. None of the four pilot participants had any direct experience in debate. In the second iteration, the pilot participants took part in the series of tasks which had been refined after the testing in the first iteration. In contrast to the first iteration, in which the collaborative feedback of the participants informed the refinement, the second iteration was designed to systematically trial the reworked tasks as if it was the actual data collection process. Therefore, the performance of the participants was closely monitored and audio recorded in order to find any potential problems occurring during the tasks.

Third iteration

In the third iteration, the actions of thirty-eight participants who worked in pairs in the scaffolding tasks and debate were systematically monitored and documented for further analysis, evaluation and subsequent modification and consolidation within the design principles. Although the interventions were situated outside the actual classrooms, I still consider this research study as having been carried out authentically, because they were developed for and tested with the target group of students enrolled upon a BA in EFL at the university. It is hoped that the findings and design principles will have direct implications for the integration of debate in an English oral communication course, with the purpose of reinforcing the students' thinking and argumentation skills in addition to their general communication skills.

4.2.6.4 Stage 4: Reflection

The final phase of DBR involved a reflection on the outcomes from the third iteration for further improvement and also the production of an improved theoretical framework for the design. Herrington et al. (2007) describe the knowledge claims of DBR according to three dimensions, which entail scientific, practical and societal outputs. To generate a knowledge claim from the scientific output, the investigator was required to analyse the use of design principles and how the intervention would fit into an EFL classroom in higher education in the Thai context. Moreover, the practical outputs concern an evaluation of the process and the outcomes of the interventions. The generation of knowledge in this research study would have pedagogical

implications, particularly for an integration of debate into English speaking classrooms in the local or other similar contexts. With regard to societal outputs, the analysis and the evaluation of the process was carried out by considering to what extent the design principles and knowledge claims would be beneficial for EFL teachers, especially, those who have little or no experience of how to integrate debate in EFL oral communication classrooms at a university.

In conclusion, apart from creating and iterating interventions and exploring what the outcomes are, the final process of DBR is aimed at generating the design principles or theory of teaching and learning, which has implications for both the local and other similar contexts. This final stage addressed RQ3 which is aimed at developing the principles of teaching argumentation in an EFL classroom in higher education.

4.2.7 **Observation: Method of data collection for RQ1**

In this study, observation was regarded as a useful data-gathering technique for seeking to understand the mediated actions of the participants when performing the scaffolding tasks and debate in Stage 3. The time period required for running each observation depended on the duration of the scaffolding tasks and debate assigned to the participants. Observation offers insights into complex processes and interactions and the instinctive actions or behaviour of participants that goes beyond the understanding conveyed in verbalised accounts (Nicholls, Mills and Kotecha, 2014). The strengths of observation have been addressed in Simpson and Tuson's (1995) work. The authors state that observation allows first-hand monitoring of the members of that particular setting and the permanent documentation of what is happening during the events and so forth (Simpson and Tuson, 1995; Marshall and Rossman, 1999). My observations which were carried out by taking fieldnotes and audio recordings allowed me to capture not only the immediate actions of the participants but also what I perceived as occurring outside of the immediate actions (Arthur *et al.*, 2014).

Janesick (1998) states that careful examination about what aspects of the activities are to be observed needs to be made in order to best facilitate the provision of answers to

research questions. With the focused observations (see Spradley, 1980), I started with a relatively clear idea that I would explore any evidence that indicated the outcomes of the proposed interventions and any potential problems associated with the design. The information conveyed through observations during the testing of the interventions during Stage 3 was documented in the form of fieldnotes. The first and second cycles of iterations were mainly intended to document problems and limitations about the designed tasks and this helped to refine the interventions. When the participants engaged in the tasks in the third iteration, fieldnotes were still used as a method for documenting activities that the participants engaged in and any other matters I noticed - both internal and external to their immediate actions.

Apart from fieldnotes, audio recording was also used in all three cycles of iteration to capture the participants' debate. It should be noted that the participants also knew that their verbal actions in debate were audio recorded. The audio recording started and was consistently carried out for both speakers during the time they were performing the debate. At least two voice recorders were used to tackle any unexpected technical problems that could have occurred during the data recording process.

Despite the fact that video recording is considered an effective and powerful method, audio recording was chosen to capture the incidences being observed in this research study. Apart from the data derived from taking fieldnotes, the participants' verbal ideas, which were due to the outcomes of the mediational means incorporated for the debates were also used for the evaluation of the interventions. Audio recording was sufficient and valid enough to document what I was observing; this was because any non-verbal cues that occurred in the debate were not considered as the focus of the investigation. More importantly, using audio recordings, compared to video recordings, can better minimise the participants' awareness of their being observed. The video recording can lead to an overly descriptive analysis of the qualitative data. Compared to a voice recorder, a video camera can capture a better reality, however, this can make the participants feel nervous, self-conscious and uncomfortable. Foster (1996) notes that participants may change their behaviour in response to the observations when they know they are being studied. Consequently, this can be a

threat to the validity of the observation. When the participants become overly conscious that they are being observed and recorded, their feelings can affect their reactions and performances in the tasks. Therefore, I considered audio recording more appropriate for the use of capturing the participants' statements in debate during this project.

Simpson and Tuson (1995) note that the observational technique also has limitations due to demands on effort, time and resources. However, some of these limitations turned out to provide strengths for the observation because repeated scrutiny of the same event in the field allowed me to be able to capture instances and improve the validity of the findings (Merriam, 1988). The validity of the observation in this research study relates to the extent to which the documentation of the observation can adequately describe the participants' actual performance in the tasks and also any problems associated with the design of the interventions.

4.2.7.1 The trustworthiness of observations

Trustworthiness in social science research is more problematic, because human behaviour varies in different situations and different periods and there can be multiple interpretations of what is happening around us (Merriam, 1988). There are certain strategies associated with strengthening the trustworthiness of observation in qualitative research. Guba and Lincoln (1981) contend that repetitively conducting a single method of observation within the same study can elicit consistency in findings. In this research, I had direct experience in repeatedly observing and documenting the same incidents, which took place during the twenty-one sessions of the scaffolding tasks and twenty-one debate sessions; for approximately three months. I applied the same process of observation and documentation in the tasks to all of the forty-two participants.

Furthermore, with regard to documentation, Seale (1999) highlights that the recording of observations should be conducted in a way that is as concrete as possible. This strategy is more trustworthy than when researchers use their personal perspectives to reconstruct the general sense of informants' statements, and this can influence the

validity of their reports. As per Seale's suggestion, what was happening during the activities, the problems occurring in the tasks and the main viewpoints of the participants' statements when performing the tasks were documented through note taking. The artefacts that I collected from the participants included worksheets and their notes for debate. Documentation of the participants' performance in debate was undertaken using audio recording.

4.2.8 **Research interview: Method of data collection for RQ1**

The final process of data collection involved interviewing each participant in Thai, which is their L1, after each pair had completed the debate task. The interview was intended to elicit the participants' individual reflections on their experiences in performing the scaffolding tasks and debate. The qualitative data generated from the interviews greatly contributed to the refinement of the interventions. Ellis (2003) asserts that student-based evaluation of tasks can be carried out quickly and effectively using interviews. Moreover, it is a way of gaining access to more personal and private feelings regarding the relevant situations (Arksey and Knight, 1999). I regarded my interview with the participants as an intermental process. It should encourage the participants to articulate any verbal thoughts which can represent what they have internalised from their interaction with the mediating agents in the scaffolding tasks and debate. In the same way, having conversations with the students can be transformed into my recognition and understanding of the extent to which the interventions effectively fostered the participants' argumentation skills.

The interviews enabled me to determine how the participants see their experiences in the learning activities in this research study. In the work of Kvale (1996) and Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), interviews are defined as the forms of conversations which attempt to understand a social reality from the subjects' points of view in order to uncover the meanings of their experiences. As an alternative to methodological positivism in social sciences and due to the wide availability of recording devices, qualitative interviews have been increasingly employed in social science as a research method to obtain knowledge from participants (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

If one views knowledge of the social world as subjective, experience-based and collaboratively constructed, Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) 'traveller metaphor' for the interviewer is relevant to my research position. The traveller metaphor regards knowledge as something constructed between the researcher, as an interviewer, and an interviewee. The researcher plays an active role in the interview process and constructing meaning from the interview data. The authors wrote:

> The interviewer-traveller wonders through the landscape and enters into conversations with the people he or she encounters… The potentialities of meanings in the original stories are differentiated and unfolded through the traveller's interpretations of the narratives her or she brings back to home audiences. The journey may not only lead to new knowledge; the traveller might change as well. (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 48)

The position of the interviewer-traveller put forward in their work clearly envisages that the interview is an approach to actively construct knowledge. The authors characterised interview knowledge as inter-subjective and socially constructed through the linguistic interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee.

According to the model of interviewing proposed in the work of Silverman (2006), from an epistemological perspective, interview data is exploratory and in-depth, and the interview process is regarded as part of the representation of the participants' perspectives on their interactions with the mediating agents during the scaffolding tasks and debate. The interview interaction carried out to provide answers for RQ1 was intended to achieve a deep exploration of the participants' perspectives on their experiences in the scaffolding tasks and debate. Maintaining the dynamic in an interview talk helps to provide a great deal of content from the interviewees. Interpretation of the interview data prioritised what this research study actually sought to explore.

I interviewed all of the forty-two participants individually and each of them attended the interview only once. When possible, the interviews were carried out immediately after each pair had completed the debate. The interviews were conducted in Thai, which is the participants' first language. The interview questions which were later translated into English and the rationale are presented in Appendix 6.

4.2.8.1 Semi-structured interviews

One-on-one, semi-structured interviews were the key feature of the qualitative interviews used in this research study. Adopting the traveller metaphor, my strategy was that the interview should be carried out in a flexible-formatted conversation, along with the use of a set of guiding questions. Although the conversations were partly interviewer-led and partly informant-led, the focus had to be on the interviewees' narratives. The interviews were designed to give the interviewees who were exposed to, or directly involved in certain situations, the freedom to articulate their thoughts, perceptions and feelings in a way through which they might directly or indirectly respond to the interview questions. Kvale (1996) states that the use of interviews in research studies suggests a move away from the notion of seeing human subjects as simply behaviouristic and controllable subjects. Meanwhile, the interviewer can still use her judgement to improvise in order to allow the interviews to flow or to control the interviews in order to achieve the overall purposes of the exercise. Further, during one-on-one interviews, the interviewer can observe non-verbal cues, which can often reveal the informants' emotions and reactions with regard to the topic of the interviews. As the interviewer, I needed to gather as much in-depth data, which was unprompted and vital, as possible. The one-on-one interviews allowed me to really notice whether or not the informants felt uneasy. These feelings can affect the way the informants responded to the interview questions. The flexible structure of the format also allowed me to change the order of pre-planned questions.

The interviews were carried out in the Thai language, which is, of course, the informants' first language. When encouraging the research participants to explore certain aspects of the study, language and terms that are fully understandable to the informants must be used for the inquiries to be effective (Johnson and Christensen, 2012; Rubin and Rubin, 2012). Asking questions and allowing the participants to provide answers in Thai helped to better to clarify both the questions and the answers. Nonetheless, considering the linguistic durability of the participants, code-switching between Thai and English was also allowed according to their preference.

I opted for open-ended questions, which appear to be less controlling and offer a greater potential to obtain more in-depth opinions. Due to the use of these types of question, the informants freely expressed their feelings in their own words. When the interview questions promoted a positive interaction, this contributed to the documenting of a substantial and genuine level of data from the interviewees. In terms of the questions and the structure of the interviews, the questions were designed to thematically contribute to the process of knowledge production, as well as to dynamically promote effective interview interaction (Kvale, 1996; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

Compared to notetaking and video recording, audio recording was recognised as being the most appropriate method for recording all interview sessions in this research study. Note-taking was not practical in this research study in terms of the number of the interviewees and the length of the interview sessions. It was also unnecessary to record the interviews using video because the interviewees' postures and facial expressions were not the focus of this research study. Moreover, audio recordings can capture the whole conversation verbatim, including the tone of voice, paralanguage and pauses (Arksey and Knight, 1999). The ideas, verbally expressed, were the key element to capture.

4.2.8.2 Conducting interview

Each interview session was carried out in six stages[10], as suggested in Rubin and Rubin's (2012) work. Following Stage 1, 2 and 3, I started the interviews with a short, casual chat with the participants, introducing the purpose and procedures of the research study and my role in this research study, before asking for permission to record the interviews. In Stage 4, the main open-ended questions were presented in a reasonable sequence according to the activities the interviewees engaged with, in order to retrieve data from their memories and feelings. The main questions were designed to be broad enough to allow the interviewees to respond in their own way, as

[10] Rubin and Rubin (2012) have documented the guidelines for qualitative interviews. According to the authors, an interview composes of a number of stages, including (1) arrival and introductions, (2) introducing the research, (3) beginning the interview, (4) during the interview, (5) ending the interview and (6) after the interview.

suggested by Rubin and Rubin (2012). The questions mainly consisted of Wh-questions rather than Yes-No questions. The follow-up questions such as "Why?" were used for achieving an even greater level of elaboration in which there might by an emergence of other points relevant to the research questions. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) highlight that being open about personal and sometimes emotional experiences might cause some anxiety for interviewees; moreover, debriefing before ending the interview was similar to the 'cooling down' process. At this stage, the interviewees were given an opportunity to ask questions.

4.2.8.3 The trustworthiness of the interview

Silverman (2006) regards the trustworthiness of interviews as of the utmost importance in qualitative research. I had to ensure that the questions actually contributed to obtaining the relevant data that this research study attempted to investigate; and that the responses actually reflected the respondents' experiences and feelings without any undue influence. Further, it is important to implement an interviewing process that avoids bias. The sources of these aspects can emanate from the interviewer, the informant's characteristics, and the content of the questions (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). As the interviewer, I needed to avoid leading the informants to respond in such a way that simply meets my expectations or endorses my views during the course of the interview. Regarding the content of the questions, the set of open-ended questions were simple, and I avoided asking leading questions during the interviews. For example, a question like "How important is having a debate activity in an English classroom?" would put the interviewees in a position in which they might feel obligated to agree with this statement and express a positive response to it. Therefore, it was better to ask "Tell me how you would feel if there was a debate-like activity in an English oral communication course?", and then ask "Why?"

Additionally, Silverman (2006) suggests that researchers should make sure each informant understands the questions in the same way to minimise any possibility of uncertain and ambiguous answers that can cause difficulty in coding. Pre-testing the interview was very useful because this allowed the researcher to be gradually familiar with the process of the interview and the questions beforehand. As previously

mentioned, audio recording for all one-on-one interviews was carried out in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the interview recording and its ensuing transcription.

4.2.8.4 My research position in the interview

The participants recognised me as a lecturer who was conducting a research project at the university. With regard to the role I maintained and the concomitant power relations, I realised that my presence at the research site would to some extent affect how the students acted and viewed the social reality. Taking a non-hierarchical approach, which emphasises avoiding the objectification of the participants (Yeo *et al.*, 2014), I attempted to reduce the gap between myself as researcher and the interviewees. To do so, the interview needed to be conducted in a cooperative manner. The style of the one-on-one interviews should build trust with the participants, emphasising that my role in the interviews was not as a lecturer of the university, but rather as a researcher from the University of Bristol. Prior to the interviews, the interviewees were ensured that their participation in this research project was anonymous and had no impact on their grades and that their interviews would be treated as confidential.

4.2.9 **Likert scale questionnaire**

Apart from the semi-structured interview, a paper-and-pencil, Likert scale questionnaire was incorporated into the process of data gathering for answering RQ1 (see Appendix 7). In terms of administration, the questionnaire was practical and convenient for the researcher to distribute immediately after the participants completed the debate. The questionnaire was incorporated into the data collection process for the following reasons. First, it was administered as an 'across-method triangulation'[11] (Denzin, 1970) to elicit the participants' degrees of feelings about their argumentation and English language skills. Although the use of qualitative data provides a deeper understanding of social phenomena, Silverman (2006) highlights the reliability of interpretation in qualitative research that can be weakened by the failure of a researcher to categorise the actions described. As the interpretation of the

[11] Denzin (1970) defined 'across-method triangulation' as the strategy of combining dissimilar methods to measure the same elements.

qualitative data relies on the credibility of the information that the researcher provides, it is unlikely that the data from the semi-structured interview alone can indicate exactly the perceptions the participants held around the argumentation and the English language skill abilities that they used in performing the tasks. The qualitative-quantitative linkage between distinct data types is identified in Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014), when they assert that qualitative data can be compared with numerical data. The qualitative information from the semi-structured interviews in the current study can thereby be compared with numerical data from the rating scale questionnaire which the same participants filled out. Flick (2014) emphasises that linking the results of an interview and a questionnaire can enable acquisition of further knowledge about the subject matter, which is broader than that provided by a single approach.

Secondly, the Likert scale is an instrument that is often used to elicit respondents' degrees of opinions and feelings, since they allow respondents to indicate the strength of their attitudes towards each specified topic (Foddy, 1993). The five-point scale format was employed in order to encourage simplicity and avoid the problem associated with the respondents' misinterpretation of the two centremost numbers, as suggested by Johnson and Christensen (2012). The items in the five-point Likert scale questionnaire include two sets of questions, which were aimed at investigating the participants' perceptions of their argumentation skills and English communication skills, respectively. The first set of question was organised in association with the order of the tasks. In retrospect, the participants thought of and evaluated their abilities in handling the scaffolding tasks and debate. The other set involved the self-evaluation of their English communication skills, particularly listening and speaking skills. I also incorporated 'affective' variables, including confidence, motivation and anxiety, as suggested in Robinson's model (2001) around determining variables of task difficulty.

4.2.10 **My research position in DBR**

As a qualitative researcher, I invoked the concept that knowledge cannot be generated independently outside of human minds and must be socially constructed. The value-laden nature of qualitative research has been highlighted in the work of several

scholars (e.g. Denzin, 1970; Silverman, 2006). A value-free research study in social science, which positivists have envisaged, is not generally considered plausible (Silverman, 2006). With this in mind, I realised that the values I hold would echo the choices I made and my actions in this research study. Therefore, I positioned myself as a researcher, who worked on the practical problems but I also have an existing position as a lecturer of the Department of English, where this research study was situated. Conceptualising practical problems in a local context was made practicable through my perspectives as an experienced lecturer here. My rationale and justification to employ debate to foster argumentation skills, shaped the design of the mediational tools. As a researcher, the expectation I have is that this research study will contribute to developing mediational tools which can be effectively implemented in a speaking course offered in an EFL curriculum, while generating certain principles for the teaching of argumentation skills in an EFL speaking classroom in higher education in Thailand.

Another role I maintained was as a facilitator who expedited the tasks for this research study. I strictly applied the instructions and assured myself that similar procedures were applied equally to all the participants. Taking the position as a researcher or an observer in the stage of testing the interventions, I was aware that my observations were not value-free. As introduced in Chapter 1, the debate format that I adopted in this research have been inspired by my experiences observing debate workshops and competitions and also having read much of the relevant literature. I realised that this research was initially carried out within the parameters of my understanding that debate, which is a common practice in democratic societies, particularly in Western countries, is an effective instructional tool in developing both argumentation and English communicative skills. I also had an expectation that the adoption of debate in an English Oral Communication class in the Thai context should similarly yield positive outcomes, as reported in other previous studies. I realised that the participants' actions in the relevant activities were shaped by the interventions I designed. In response to my awareness, I engaged myself in data analysis using the data-driven method. Nicholls et al. (2014) state that the qualitative data derived from observation is located in the continuum between generated and naturally occurring

evidence. Researchers conduct observations within a social constructionist or interpretivist position and acknowledge that data is the outcome of the intersubjective process between the researchers themselves and what they are observing. When collecting observational data, I was aware of engaging my role in working alongside the participants and sought to capture what I was observing. Although data was collected in a specific setting in which students were required to perform particular tasks, they were also encouraged to actually initiate their actions using their own creativity. Although the participants' actions were framed and structured within the provided debate topic, speaker position and the debate format, they were encouraged to to think freely, articulate their own verbal ideas and challenge the opposite speaker's position. After performing the tasks, dialogues between the participants and myself were intended to create a safe space for the participants to freely provide their feedback about the interventions they had experienced in accordance with their actual feelings.

4.3 Research design for RQ2: Cultural practices in EFL classrooms

RQ2: How do the social and cultural practices previously experienced by the participants shape their predispositions to engage in argumentative debates in university EFL classes?

The DBR model alone was insufficient for developing the design principles. The understanding of sociocultural contexts is a crucial element of Wertsch's (1991) approach to mediated actions. Exploring the historical, cultural and institutional contexts that Thai EFL students experienced in the EFL classrooms and how those contexts shaped their expectations of learning how to make an argument will contribute to generating design principles that can inform the teaching and learning of argumentation; within both the contexts of the research participants and in other similar contexts.

The approach to understanding the classroom practices that the participants experienced was through analyses of their perceptions. In contrast to positivism, which adheres to the notion of factual knowledge uncovered behind the talk or objective

observation, I posited that the 'way of knowing' cannot be given externally to the subjects, who engage with realities in the world and create meanings of it. Kitzinger (2004, p. 128) states that "a person's experience never emerges uncontaminated from his or her inner self, it is embedded in a social web of interpretation and re-interpretation". Drawing upon Vygotsky's concepts of the intermental and intramental processes, the participants' interactions with the mediating agents in the classrooms (e.g. teachers, symbolic tools, organised learning activities and artefacts) were internalised into their higher mental functions. With regard to Wertsch's sociocultural approach to mediated actions, the mediating agents in the EFL classrooms are situated in historical, cultural and institutional contexts, and they fundamentally impacted on the participants' mediated actions and perceptions.

Underpinned by the key aspect of sociocultural theory that emphasises the important contributions that human interaction or social processes makes to the mental development of people, I acknowledged the value of the 'researcher-participant interaction'. It is a basic method for encouraging the participants to express their views and to develop meanings from their own perspectives. In this regard, the oral research interview comes to the fore. Having conversations with the participants should explicitly encourage them to become aware of their identities as learners. It should also allow me to probe into their perceptions and make sense of them in order to understand the historical, social and cultural contexts that shaped their actions.

To provide answers for RQ2, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews were carried out after the participants performed their debates. The rationale for choosing this data collection method, the procedures for conducting the interview and the trustworthiness of the interviews, have been discussed previously in Section 4.2.8. The interviews also encouraged the participants to reflect on their classroom experience. The overview of the data collection for RQ2 is presented in Figure 4-4. However, there were different elements for the same interviews. The questions for RQ1 were prepared prior to the interview, while the questions for RQ2 included not only some core prepared questions, but also those which were spontaneously devised in accordance with the flow of the situations during the interview. The interviews were fundamental

for understanding the situations from the eyes of the informants. A collection of qualitative data sets was constructed from the participants' reflections on their actions as mediated by EFL classroom practices. The interviews also allow for an understanding of any underlying issues in a localised context.

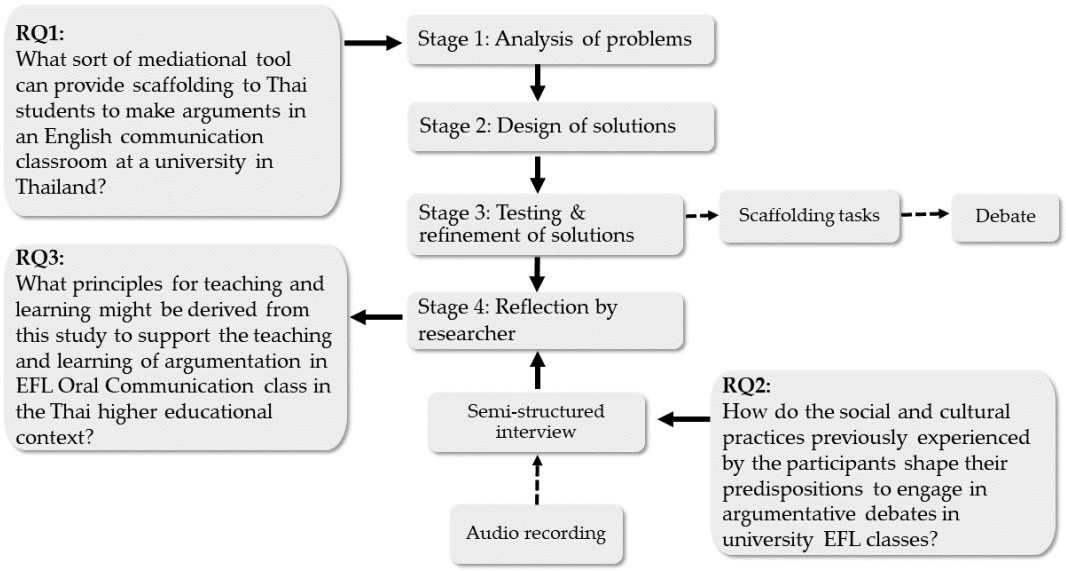


Figure 4-4 Overview of data collection process for RQ2

4.4 Data analysis

Different methods of analyses serve different purposes according to the research inquiry. Two sets of qualitative data needed to be analysed, including observational data during the scaffolding tasks and debate and the interview transcripts. The observatory data was derived from fieldnotes, worksheets, the participants' notes and the transcripts of debate. Analysis of the interview data set was carried out for answering both RQ1 and RQ2. Table 4-1 presents the types of data and the methods of data analysis.

4.4.1 Analyses of fieldnotes

Questions should be raised prior to the analysis of the fieldnotes (Silverman, 2013). Guided by Silverman' list of questions, the analysis and interpretation started with the following questions: (1) what were the participants trying to accomplish; (2) what

specific mediational means did they use; (3) how did they interact and understand what was going on; (4) what assumptions were they making; (5) what do I, as an observer, perceive from the immediate actions and what do I learn from the notes, and (6) why do I include what I learned in the notes.

Apart from interpreting the data with regard to the above questions, Spencer and colleagues (2014) state that observational data requires management and analysis in the same way as interview data does. Like interview data, fieldnotes and other documents collected when students were performing the tasks need to be summarised. The process also included labelling which was undertaken for each section of data in accordance with the kinds of questions this research study was intended to accumulate from the data. After labelling, I searched for any potential linkage between and across labelled segments. Spencer et al. (2014) also highlight that analysts who interpret observational data need to keep in mind that this kind of data analysis is purely research-generated. Therefore, the explanation of the observed events is dependable upon the accuracy of the observers' notes.

4.4.2 **Analyses of audio recordings of debate**

The raw data derived from the debates needed to be processed before becoming available for analysis by transcription from dictation (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014). Concerning the style of transcription, there is no single or correct standard form for transcription, but there are standard choices to be made in relation to the research questions (Kvale, 1996; Flick, 2014). The researcher should consider whether, to what extent, and how transcription is useful for the data analysis process (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Rubin and Rubin, 2012). The transcription for this data set requires a line-by-line account of what has been actually stated. However, the transcripts did not need to be recorded in detail like those of a line-by-line representation of how utterances are articulated, which include non-verbal cues such as punctuation marks and symbols of intonation. This is because the outcomes of the debate and scaffolding tasks were the main focus of RQ1 rather than examination of discourse in the debates. The analysis of the transcripts was undertaken by adopting Silverman's (2013) guided questions for analysis, as mentioned in Section 4.4.1. The questions included: (1) what

the participants' intentions were in each session of their talks; (2) what argument structures they employed; and (3) what I learned from their transcripts.

Table 4-1 Types of data and methods of data analysis

RQs	Sources of data	Formats of data	Methods of data analysis	Use of data in analysis
RQ1 & RQ3	Observation of scaffolding tasks	- Fieldnotes (main source) - Worksheets and notes collected from 6 pilot participants and 38 participants in main study	Analysis using guided questions	- Researcher used fieldnotes as main source for analysis in order to make meanings of participants' actions in tasks. - Worksheets and notes were used for supporting interpretation of researcher. - Sections 5.3 and 5.4 report analysis results.
	Observation of debate	- Fieldnotes (main source) - Worksheets and notes collected from 6 pilot participants and 38 participants in main study - Transcripts of audio recordings of debate: 3 from two pilots studies and 19 from main study	Analysis using guided questions	- Fieldnotes were used as main source for analysis in order to make meanings of participants' actions in debate. - Worksheets, notes and transcripts of debates were used for supporting interpretation of researcher. - Sections 5.3.4 and 5.4.4 report analysis results.
	Interview data collected from 38 participants in 3rd iteration when reflecting on tools	Transcripts of audio recordings	Thematic analysis	- For use as main data source for exploration of participants' feedback on their engagement in tasks. - Chapter 6 presents and discusses themes.
	Five-point Likert scale questionnaires collected from 38 participants in 3rd iteration	Ordinal data	Descriptive statistic s	- For use as across-method triangulation to support researcher's analysis of observational data when exploring participants' degrees of feelings about tasks, as reported in Chapter 6.
RQ2	Interview data collected from participants: 4 pilot participants and 38 participants in 3rd iteration when reflecting on EFL classroom experience	Transcripts of audio recordings	Thematic analysis	- For use as main data source for exploration of participants' previous experience in EFL classroom practices and sociocultural contexts. - Chapter 7 presents and discusses themes.

4.4.3 **Analyses of interview data**

For the interview data, the raw data from the audio recordings needed to be processed before they were available for analysis by transcription from dictation (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014). Full transcripts of the interviews were prepared in order to further facilitate the data analysis process because it was more convenient than repeatedly playing back a recording. It should be noted that all recordings, which were in Thai language, were transcribed in Thai because the authentic texts are more likely to provide richer data than the translated versions.

RQ1 concentrated on the participants' perceptions of their experience in performing the scaffolding tasks and debate. RQ2 is intended to explore their perceptions of their experience in the EFL classrooms. With regard to the style of transcribing the data sets, the objectives of RQ1 and RQ2 implied the capturing of meanings as embedded in the interviewees' perspectives. Therefore, the transcription of this data set requires a line-by-line account of what has been actually stated. However, they do not need to be recorded in detail like those of a line-by-line representation of how utterances are articulated, which include punctuation marks and symbols of intonation. In short, the non-verbal cues, for example intonation and pauses, were not marked on the transcripts because the major focus of this research study was not to investigate discourse in the interview conversations.

Thematic analysis was utilised for discovering meanings emerging from the subjective views of the participants in the semi-structured interviews. This method was assumed to be compatible with the research objective, which is to inductively construct the meaning of reality from the participants' worldviews about their experiences with EFL classroom practices, scaffolding tasks and debates. Braun and Clarke (2006) who developed thematic analysis emphasise that thematic analysis can be a realist method which reports experiences, meanings and the reality of the informants. Adopting the 'inductive thematic analysis' approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006), codes and themes were inductively developed from the participants' individual responses without trying to fit the process of coding data into a pre-existing coding frame. The analysis process was done in consultation with Braun and Clarke (2006). As the coder, I was required to

go through the data set to capture important elements driven by the research questions. The themes were constructed mainly from prevalent codes which were counted both in terms of the number of different informants who articulated data.

The process of thematic analysis in this research involved six phases. Appendix 8 shows an example of how I coded, collated codes and develop themes. To elucidate, in the first two phases, which included familiarisation with the data and the generation of initial codes, I processed the analyses while transcribing and rereading the transcripts several times. In creating codes, the authors note that it is necessary to go beyond semantic codes (meanings expressed verbally). That is, I was required to create latent codes by keeping the context in focus and systematically working through the whole texts to uncover the underlying meanings. Phase three began when I compared the subcategories with major categories and searched for the possibility of integrating relevant codes in order to search for sub-themes and main themes, respectively. For example, two segmented units "It would be beneficial as well as good experience." and "I also wanted to defeat my own personal demons." were coded as 'gain experience' and 'overcome weaknesses', respectively. Then these two codes were collated and would then form a potential sub-theme; drives for participation'. In phase four, which involved refining the candidate themes, I removed the themes that lacked adequate supporting data, merged the relevant themes into one, and broke down a certain theme into two separate ones. This phase is also crucial for phase five which is aimed at processing the data in order to define the main themes on a thematic map. For instance, the analysis could generate clear definitions and names of the sub-themes, such as 'debilitating anxiety' and 'facilitating anxiety' to be referred to as 'anxiety'. The final phase demonstrated the claims that were driven by the research questions and my assumptions, which enabled me to construct arguments. Importantly, to make my arguments more sound and convincing I supported them with concrete extracts, as Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasise.

As I dealt with forty-two interviews (each of them lasted, approximately, about 30 minutes), the NVivo software programme[12] was employed. Its functions are useful, particularly, for the process of organising the coded data, which was hierarchically divided into a number of themes and sub-themes. Concerning the creation of a hierarchical structure of codes, which is a common part of data analysis, Gibbs (2007) recommended that the researcher avoid complicated levels of hierarchies and keep data in each code at each level so that they are consistent with each other. Gibbs' insights informed the necessity for the use of NVivo to facilitate the organisation of the nodes to generate core themes.

4.5 **Conclusion**

In response to RQ1, DBR provides a sound approach to the design and development of mediational tools for fostering argumentation skills in an EFL classroom. Being framed in DBR, the model design was carried out in four stages. The first stage of DBR allowed the incorporation of my previous teaching experience and research experience into an analysis of the practical issues within the local context. Stage 2 and Stage 3 dealt with the design and testing in multiple iterations, respectively. The final stage, which provided answers for RQ3, required my reflection on the entire process of the model development and its outcomes in order to generate the design principles for the teaching of argumentation skills through debate in an ELF speaking classroom. The data collection was carried out mainly through the observation of the participants' actions in the tasks, and the semi-structured interviews after the tasks. The observational data in the forms of fieldnotes, the participants' notes, worksheets and the interview data were later analysed to formulate themes to provide answers for RQ1 and RQ2. Finally, data from the Likert Scale questionnaire was also utilised for triangulation. The next chapter reports the way in which the model and mediational tools were designed and developed. In addition, it also describes the outcomes of the

[12] Compared to the manual approach, NVivo allows researchers to effectively organise, merge and quickly retrieve coded data and uncover possible connections across coded data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Flick, 2014; Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014).

testing and refining of the tools, before reaching the final formulation of the learning activity model.

Chapter 5 Tools for mediating argumentation: Designing, developing and testing

5.1 Overview

Chapter 5 details the design and testing of the mediational tools for introducing argumentation into an English oral communication classroom. The chapter is structured in three major parts. The first part elaborates the rationale for the design of the mediational tools for scaffolding argumentation in the classroom. The second part of the chapter discusses the process of the development and testing of the tools in the pilot studies.

The chapter brings together the theoretical and empirical literature, along with my own pilot and experimental work to provide an answer to my first research question:

RQ1: What sort of mediational tool can provide scaffolding to Thai students to make arguments in an English communication classroom at a university in Thailand?

This chapter focuses specifically on how the existing understanding of teaching argumentation in a L2 environment was incorporated into the tool design. Reflections on what I learnt by using the tools with students are discussed in Chapter 8, where I derive a set of principles for incorporating debate in EFL speaking classrooms.

5.2 Designing the intervention

The mediational tools to support the development of the students' argumentation skills took the form of a series of tasks to introduce students to the components of debate and then the experience of participating in a debate with another student. Debate was chosen, rather than ordinary discussion, as the latter would not provoke an advancing of opposite views and ensure a process of inquiring into each other's arguments. In particular, I chose to focus on a structured argument format informed by Toulmin's argument pattern because it has been widely used across a range of disciplines to model the structure of an argument and identify the elements of an argument.

The scaffolding tasks were intended to guide the students into debate and support them in conducting debate independently with peers. These were structured in a sequence, starting from Task 1: Brainstorming, Task 2: Exposure to the structure of major claim and arguments and Task 3: Making refutation (see Figure 5-1).

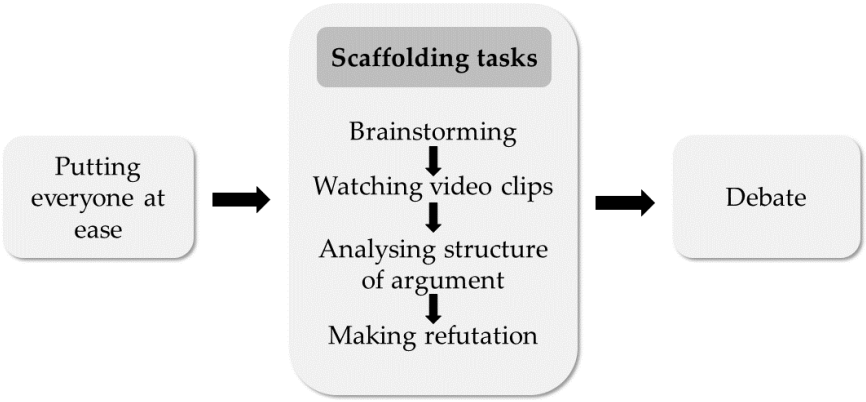


Figure 5-1 Model of learning activities

Berland and McNeill's (2010) 'learning progression' (see Figure 2-2) provided me with three dimensions to consider when designing interventions to support students in engaging in dialogical argumentation. With regard to the first dimension of the problem context, the debate motion used in this research was open for multiple views and the nature of the task itself allowed the participants to define the sorts of information that they saw as relevant to the argument for themselves. The second dimension involved attending to the formal structure of argumentation. Here, claims, arguments, refutation and rebuttals of counterarguments could be understood as defensible with adequate, legitimate reasons and evidence. Finally, participating in the argumentative process, the students were primary participants in the debate task and I was a facilitator, encouraging the participants to argue with each other within an agreed upon topic and making sure that the debate sessions accommodate addressing, evaluating, inquiring and defending arguments. According to the continuum of the learning progression, the debate task modified for this research could be classified as advanced. However, it seemed to be appropriate for learners at a university level.

After the students developed an understanding of the practice of the component tasks of argumentation in a ZPD developed between the students and the teacher/researcher, the assistance would be removed. The students would then participate in another ZPD in which they are required to perform debate in English in dialogue with each other. The debate format was used to provide a context for the students to discuss a topical issue and persuade each other of the merits of their arguments using reasoning to support their arguments. The overview and rationale of the individual scaffolding tasks and debate activity are illustrated in the following sections.

5.2.1 **Putting everyone at ease**

Vygotsky's theory emphasises the concept of the 'social', in particular as an intermental category, and its importance in the development of higher mental functions. Vygotsky used the term 'social' in an uncomplicated way to refer to 'cooperation between people' (Miller, 2011). Considering this concept, creating an atmosphere to encourage the students' cooperation in the dialogue used in the scaffolding processes is likely to yield productive outcomes. Before starting the learning activities, it was important to put everyone at ease to help make the students feel comfortable and familiarise themselves with each other and the researcher. Some of the participants may never have worked with one another in the classrooms. The session started with each person, including the researcher, briefly introducing him or herself. Further, the introduction was also helpful for restating particular information about the research project, including the procedures the students were required to implement and any ethical concerns relevant to their participation. It also provided an opportunity for the students to ask questions about the research project and the learning activities before starting the testing process.

5.2.2 **Task 1: Brainstorming**

The first activity was a brainstorming activity with the students on the topic: Do the benefits of social media applications outweigh the disadvantages? This topic was selected because it seemed relevant to the students' life experiences. It would therefore be of interest and allow them to express different opinions. It appears trite to confirm that many research studies have shown that social media applications have become

highly influential in many teenagers' everyday lives (e.g. Boy, 2008; Lenhart *et al.*, 2010). This is consistent with Stapleton's (2001) argument that familiarity with a subject matter has a powerful impact on an individual's performance in thinking tasks. As social media applications are highly relevant to students' daily lives, presumably this topic would engage the participants and elicit their opinions during their performance of the tasks.

There are strengths and weaknesses in using brainstorming. There has been a criticism that group brainstorming, particularly when performance is oral, harms the creative performance of individuals and the productivity of a group due to some factors (e.g. social loafing, social anxiety, production blocking). Indeed, individuals are more likely to generate a higher number of original ideas when they do not brainstorm with others (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2015). My reason for carrying out brainstorming is that it was intended to establish a social interaction. The use of prompted questions, conversational input and English language was intended to activate the students' background knowledge about the topic.

Secondly, brainstorming would allow the students to familiarise themselves with the debate topic beforehand. All the prompted questions used in the brainstorming informed the students about the topic area with which they were going to deal in the next tasks and focus the students' views on the topic. Willis (1996) emphasises the importance of helping learners to clarify the topic area since learners may come from different backgrounds and have strongly-held or different views on the topic. Although a debate topic was chosen based on existing social issues, it could not be assumed that all students possessed identical levels of background knowledge and experience regarding the topics for discussions. The mediated actions of the students during brainstorming allowed me to see what they regarded as important about the topic and evaluate to what extent the topic was able to drive the engagement of the students.

Finally, the use of brainstorming was also intended to pool the students' topic-related schema and vocabulary that they already knew to help facilitate the process of listening and comprehension. The significant role of prior knowledge has been

documented in the work of several scholars (e.g. Anderson *et al.*, 1977; Anderson, Pichert and Shirey, 1983; Brown and Yule, 1983; Anderson and Lynch, 1988; Long, 1989) as one of the primary information sources which leads to predictions in an interpretation of discourse. Prior to Task 2, which involved watching video clips, brainstorming was intended to allow the students to build up their expectation of the words they were going to hear in the task. Several researchers (e.g. Underwood, 1989; Vandergrift and Goh, 2012) recognise that pre-listening activities with knowledge orientation serves to activate background knowledge, offer opportunities for learners to acquire more knowledge needed for the listening task and facilitate the prediction of the source of information they are going to hear. In the process of comprehending L2 listening texts, L2 listeners utilise their prior knowledge of the structure and theme of the listening texts to form expectations about the information in the texts. They also make references and carry out hypotheses testing to confirm or disconfirm their predictions (Long, 1989; Ellis, 2003; Vandergrift and Goh, 2012). It seems beneficial to encourage the students to make use of their existing world knowledge to anticipate the structures and the themes in the listening texts.

The instructions and procedures of the task are elaborated in Appendix 9. The following are the brainstorming questions which were tested in the first iteration.

1) What are the social media applications or websites that people use frequently nowadays?
2) Why are they popular among users?
3) What social media applications have you used?
4) What are the purposes of using those applications?
5) What are the benefits of using social media applications?
6) What could be the drawback of relying so much on social media applications?

Questions 1 and 2 were intended to observe the extent to which the students had background knowledge about social media applications. Questions 3 and 4 were developed to associate the students' own experience with the topic. This will help maintain their engagement in the brainstorming. Questions 5 and 6 explored the positive and negative aspects of social media applications and were constructed to

encourage the students to generate ideas about other related issues around social media applications.

5.2.3 **Task 2: Exposure to the structure of major claim and arguments**

Task 2 was developed to provide the students with assistance in analysing how the speakers in the video clips structured and presented their claims and arguments. The instructions and procedures of the task are shown in Appendix 10. Two video clips from the TED Talk series were chosen because they contain communicative video in which the speakers deliver their propositions on the issues around social media applications. Further, the way the speakers structured their talks provided an implicit model for the structuring of an argument. The first video clip, 'Online Social Change: Easy to Organise, Hard to Win', was presented by Zeynep Tufekci (2016) and the other one, 'How Social Media Makes Us Unsocial', was presented by Alison Graham (2014). The rationale for including two talks in this task was to present the participants with differing positive and negative opinions of social media applications. Encouraging the participants to extend their thinking about social media applications in different angles would contribute to their performance in the latter tasks.

5.2.3.1 Video clips

Video clips were employed as part of the scaffolding process for several reasons. First, the exposure to this mediational tool would facilitate not only building schema about a topical issue, but also lay the foundation for contexts that would be useful for handling the latter tasks. The video clips were intended to provide the students with an exposure to sources of information and vocabulary about the debate topic. Nunan (2004) notes that schema building is the first step of instructional sequences for introducing a task. Schema building will serve to introduce the topic, set the context for the task and introduce some of the key vocabulary and expressions that are necessary for the students to perform the task. Additionally, Ruggiero (1988) states that media reports of current issues or events are an excellent source of material for thinking instruction. That is because any exercises involving current affairs deliver the multimodal messages that thinking skills are associated with that are relevant to everyday life. Vandergrift and Goh (2012) state that incorporating visual media in

listening activities can provide a helpful context which can have an impact on cognitive processing for learning because L2 listeners are likely to comprehend more when aural and visual information support each other. Therefore, the video clips were chosen because they were directly related to the debate topic.

Secondly, the 'authentic' video clips, which contained naturally occurring language, were used during the phase of data collection as a linguistic model for how to structure an argument in English. This research study adopted Toulmin's argument pattern as a framework for mediating the structure of an argument. The video clips were chosen on the basis of the extent to which they exemplified the structure examined with Toulmin's model and intended to present this knowledge. Ka-Kan-Dee and Kaur's (2014) research study reported that Thai EFL students had an unclear conceptual knowledge about argumentation. It can be assumed that constructing a major claim would extend beyond the students' actual ability levels to do so. To assist the students to progress through the ZPD, it is necessary to present a fundamental model of an argument with a task. Nunan (2004) points out that instructions and materials should provide supporting frameworks within which learning can take place. The video clips and post-viewing activities were incorporated to support a conceptualisation of the structure of a claim and an argument and how the elements were related to one another. It is anticipated that the knowledge provided and developed through this exposure would be continually applied to the identification and evaluation of major claims and arguments in the latter tasks.

The original versions of the video clips last, approximately, sixteen minutes and thirteen minutes, respectively, and this was deemed too long in their entirety for the study. They were edited by presenting the first four minutes of the first video clip and the first three minutes of the second video clip. Kintsch's (1988) model of text comprehension suggests that, apart from vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, working memory and attention make a contribution to listening comprehension. Secondly, the unedited video clips presented more than one major claim and several arguments. I determined that both original video clips were overlong and it would be difficult for the students to process all this information and input in real time. The

decision to edit was to ensure that each excerpt presented one clear major claim regardless of whether there was more than one argument and more evidence to support it. Furthermore, any claim and arguments presented in each excerpt should be clear-cut and well structured. It was hoped that this would make the identification of argument elements straightforward for the participants.

The first four minutes of Tufekci's talk explored how social media applications have been used as a powerful tool for social and political movements. After that, the speaker expressed her concern about how online activism was relatively easy to foster, but more difficult to sustain. Accordingly, the talk was edited to specifically present only the aspect that social media applications were powerful tools for inspiring social movements. Graham's entire talk was segmented into three major parts, including how social media has disconnected people, the current situation in this regard and how society can improve and regulate these impacts. The excerpt of Graham's talk specifically focused on the first part. Both Tufekci's and Graham's edited excerpts provided excellent samples for how to model the structure of a claim and an argument. The excerpts included one major claim which was supported by more than one argument and evidence, in accordance with Toulmin's argument pattern that I was trying to introduce to the students.

The English subtitles available on the video clips were turned on to allow the students to cope with any gaps in comprehension, in accordance with a technique suggested by Vandergrift and Goh (2012). There may be a challenge for some L2 students to be able to actually understand the excerpts in English, especially, when their comprehension was limited and they needed to deal with particular language problems (e.g. unfamiliar accents, unknown words and syntactic structures (Ur, 1984)). Without a comprehension aid, such as English subtitles, their ability to identify the underlying structure of an argumentative speech might be affected. Additionally, each excerpt was played twice to ensure that the students were able to comprehend the texts.

5.2.3.2 Structure of argument

After watching the video clips, I developed a post-watching activity to encourage awareness of the argument structures involved in the clips. Empirical studies (e.g. Zohar, Weinberger and Tamir, 1994; Alvarez Ortiz, 2007; Abrami *et al.*, 2008; Marin and Halpern, 2011) have shown that the explicit teaching of the structure of an argument is likely to be more effective in the development of students' thinking capacities when compared to implicit teaching.

Accordingly, after the students had searched for major claims and arguments from the video clips, I initiated a discussion with the students to help them recognise the structure of a major claim and an argument along the lines of Toulmin's argument pattern. Similar to the symbolic mediators, like counting fingers, tying knots and casting lots that Vygotsky (1978) referred to in his work as indicative of human higher mental functions, the participants' acquisition of argumentation would be mediated by Toulmin's argument pattern. Our discussions were intended to encourage the students to learn the features of the model and how to structure a sound argument. This is part of the scaffolding process to support the students to be able to apply the knowledge being acquired to build sound arguments in debate.

5.2.3.3 Worksheet

The worksheet was developed to guide the students about what they were required to do in the task. It provided the students with the information necessary for performing the task such as the instructions, the titles of the excerpts and the questions (see Appendix 10). Underwood (1989) emphasises the importance of making sure learners know exactly what they are required to do, otherwise not knowing can cause students to disengage from the task. The titles of the excerpts also facilitate a prediction of the possible content of the talks. The questions would also guide the students about the elements of an argument that they should focus on while watching the excerpts.

5.2.4 **Task 3: Making refutation**

Just having the students analyse the structure of argument is unlikely to be adequate in ensuring the students are able to perform debate on their own. The evidence from the

research studies by Nussbaum and Kardash (2005) and Qin and Karabacak (2010) confirmed the importance of providing the students with more conditions in which they can construct counterarguments, refutation and rebuttals in order to improve the quality of their arguments. There needs to be additional scaffolding tasks which can encourage the students to activate the knowledge of the argument pattern gained from the preceding task - namely, understanding the structure of a major claim and an argument. The level of potential development that the students were expected to achieve was to be able to apply the knowledge of argument structure in debate performance. In response to this, practicing making refutations is essential for familiarising the students for the challenge which commonly takes place during debate.

In this next activity, the students were then invited to refute the arguments of the speakers from the video clips they had watched. Providing preparation time allowed the students, especially those who were not familiar with the characteristics of debate, to think about what they would say. The ability to make refutation with arguments and supporting evidence was a good indicator of the readiness to move on to the debate task.

In Thai culture, the students have little exposure to classroom debate and little experience of the practice of refutation. This task was developed to create the connections between the students' prior knowledge of this common practice in debate and the concept of refutation which was the content to be learnt. The information regarding the instructions is addressed in Appendix 11.

The scaffolding process was carried out by introducing the ideal concept of refutation before allowing the students to familiarise themselves with making refutation. The task was created to provide the students with an opportunity to rehearse some refutation and to activate the knowledge of the structure of a major claim and an argument which they acquired from the previous task. Nunan (2004) states that students learn best through actively using what they acquired and doing. This practicing stage would, to some extent, build up their knowledge and the skills necessary for making refutation which should contribute to their independent performance in debate. Willis (1996)

emphasises that students benefit from an exposure to task-based language learning activities which present a higher degree of cognitive and linguistic challenge.

5.2.5 **Task 4: Debate**

The genre of debate requires the skills of constructing and verbalising reasonable arguments and challenging the opponent's arguments with legitimate reasons. Based on my prior positive experience of introducing debate with students, in designing this task I conjectured that an individual's argumentation skills might be developed by engaging in a conventional debate which has oppositional and competitive characteristics. I was anticipating that this experience of formalised debate would evoke the expression of different opinions from the students and provide them with the opportunities to propose and defend their arguments and even challenge their interlocutors.

Importantly, one of my considerations when designing the debate task was making sure that it provided students with an opportunity to frame arguments in a logical manner using Toulmin's argument pattern. The task was specifically modified to encourage students to learn to discover and evaluate information relevant to the debate topic to be able to explain their arguments with warrant and incorporate evidence into their arguments. As discussed in Section 2.5.1, a modification of Toulmin's model, which is fundamentally monological, is required for dialogical argumentation. Particularly, debate which requires refutation of opponent's arguments and rebuttals to opposing arguments should accommodate the application of the elements of Toulmin's argument pattern.

5.2.5.1 Debate format

The debate task was adapted from the conventional educational debate format. This specific form of debate comprises of two teams; an affirmative team and a negative team, and each team has three speakers. In the debate, the affirmative speaker is expected to present complete arguments in favour of the resolution, whereas the negative speakers are required to offer complete arguments against the affirmative standpoints.

The modified debate in this research study partially maintained the educational debate format, but it was performed in pairs instead of in a team format (although working in a team helps to increase collaboration amongst the members, I was concerned that there might be an unequal participation and less contributions from certain individual members when working in the team format). One of the participants was assigned to the proposition speaker and the other to the opposition speaker and both speakers took turns in presenting their arguments. The nature of debate requires the speakers' articulation of their arguments in a structured manner according to their positions and roles. Presenting arguments in a structured manner was intended to minimise interruption, which may occur during ordinary interactions. With regard to its format, the task consisted of three rounds or six sessions of the talks.

As previously described, the format of debate in this research study was reworked to facilitate pair work activity. In conventional debate, session 2 involves dealing with delivering counterarguments against the arguments that the proposition speaker has just presented. However, for this study the opposite speaker was required to offer a counterclaim in session 2, instead of clashing with the arguments of the proposition speaker. My reason to designate the role of the opposition speaker in session 2 this way was due to the limited experience in debate of the students. I felt that following the conventional debate format might be difficult for the inexperienced students who were assigned in the role of the opposition speaker. Consequently, this might make them feel disadvantaged and demotivated to perform.

The final task was complex. In performing the debate, the students were required to interact not only with their peers but also with mediational tools such as the argument pattern, different sources of information and evidence in order to construct robust arguments. They were also required to deal with linguistics signs in English to be able to effectively articulate their thoughts. Their use of effective reasoning and the English language plays a significant role in persuading their interlocutors and the audience to accept their positions in debate.

Finally, the design of the debate task was intended to activate and demonstrate the knowledge and skills of the argumentation process that the students have already

acquired from the scaffolding tasks. The students' performance should allow the researcher to observe their ability to construct arguments. The task was designed by considering the students' prior knowledge and experiences and their potential abilities. In the preceding tasks, the structure of a claim and an argument and the concept of refutation were explicitly introduced to the students. To meet the requirements of debate, the students were required to apply their necessary knowledge for constructing and logically presenting their claims and arguments in favour of or against the resolution of the given topic and making refutation against the opposite speaker's standpoints with legitimate and sound reasons. Obviously, it is worth considering whether or not the knowledge and skills that the students acquired from the previous tasks would be sufficient for implementing this task. Nunan (2004) notes that if the scaffolding is removed prematurely, there will be a potential that the learning process will fail. On the other hand, if it is maintained too long, the students will not develop their independence in learning. Similarly, Ellis (2003) points out that the tasks must be arranged in appropriate sequence and proffer an appropriate and proper challenge for the students to perform. With regard to this, the debate task was aimed at exploiting and building on the knowledge and skills mastered from the tasks that were carried out in the previous stages. It was estimated that those tasks would ensure that the students were led to the level where they would be able to independently carry out debate. The handout which provides information about Task 4, a diagram of the debate format and the roles of speakers is presented in Appendix 12.

5.2.5.2 Pairing

There are justifiable reasons to randomly assign the students into pairs for debate rather than considering the similar levels of their English language proficiency. The objective of this research study is to investigate the impact of the designed interventions, rather than assessing their English language proficiency. It should be noted that debate involved the interaction between the students and focused on the meaning rather than the linguistic form. This view is advocated by scholars in the field of task-based language teaching (Nunan, 1989; Lee, 2000; Bygate, Skehan and Swain, 2001). Those scholars argue that a task principally requires the use of language with an

emphasis on meaning rather than form. As previously stated, this research study concentrated on designing pedagogical interventions to foster the students' argumentation skills, rather than investigating their levels of English proficiency.

5.2.5.3 Time Preparation

Allowing time for the participants to prepare themselves was considered essential because debate was mostly unfamiliar to the participants and they were required to perform the tasks in English. Willis (1996) notes that providing individuals with an appropriate preparation time for certain tasks can positively result in their performance The author maintains that a reasonable preparation time allows the students to plan how to deal with the task, prepare the content, and think about the way to articulate it. Preparation time might also play a part in word choice, the complexity and variety of sentence structures and the fluency of their language use. A thirty-minute preparation time was allocated to both the proposition and opposition speakers before performing debate. Although the participants were majoring in EFL, I allowed them an opportunity to prepare themselves beforehand because this kind of task requires multiple skills such as searching for, synthesising and organising information, reasoning, verbally presenting in L2, and spontaneously making refutations and rebuttals.

5.3 **Developing the tool through pilot studies: First and second iterations**

The first and second iterations of testing and refining of the interventions were treated as pilot studies. The first pilot study took place in Bristol with two Thai PhD students. One student had no experience in debate, while the other had some limited experience when he was an undergraduate. A week before the main study was carried out, the second pilot study had been undertaken with four third-year undergraduates of the English programme at the research site in Thailand. Four participants had been randomly selected from the whole group of the forty-two volunteers to take part in the second pilot study. All of the four pilot participants had no direct experience in debate. As described in Section 4.2.6.3, the time constraints of the study necessitated the need to develop the initial interventions and test them in the first pilot study to ensure that those interventions would be advanced enough for further testing in the second pilot

study and the main study at the research site. Testing of the interventions in the second pilot study was intended to ensure the appropriateness of the interventions being implemented later in the main study. The interventions were carried out in the same sequence as the debate proper, starting from Task 1: Brainstorming, Task 2: Exposure to the structure of major claim and arguments, Task 3: Making refutation and Task 4: Debate. In addition, the analysis of the data collected from the pilot studies allowed the researcher to assess and correct some challenging issues around the design of the tasks in the first and second iterations. The data set included the field notes taken when the three pairs of the pilot participants were performing the tasks and transcriptions of the six interviews carried out immediately after they had completed the tasks.

I describe below how each task was perceived in these first iterations of the design, and the concerns, strengths and weaknesses raised about each task in the process. The challenging issues around the design had implications, in particular, for the third iteration and resulted in further refinements.

5.3.1 **Outcomes of tool testing: Task 1**

The results of the brainstorming were considered as satisfactory according to the participants' involvement and contributions in the interactions. This indicated that those questions were able to engage the pilot participants in the topic and encourage discussion. The topic about social media applications was sufficient in maintaining the interest and involvement of the pilot participants in the entire process. There were three points that the participants made in the interviews. First, this topic was not external to their daily life or beyond their understanding. Secondly, it was not too simple, rather it was challenging enough to elicit their thinking during debate. Lastly, it is not an intimidating topic and they felt they could readily develop their arguments and bring their personal experience into developing their ideas.

The pilot participants contributed to the conversations and generated ideas relevant to the questions in the brainstorming task. However, the observations indicated that Questions 2, 4 and 5 elicited similar perspectives of the users on using social media applications (see Figure 5-2). Therefore, Questions 2 and 4 were merged into one. I

decided to keep Question 5 because it encouraged the participants to think of the advantages of using social media applications in broader perspectives, apart from their own personal reasons. In Question 6, the word 'drawback' looked unfamiliar to some of the pilot participants. It appeared to be the context within the question that helped them determine its meaning. Therefore, this word 'drawback' needed to be replaced by a more familiar word.

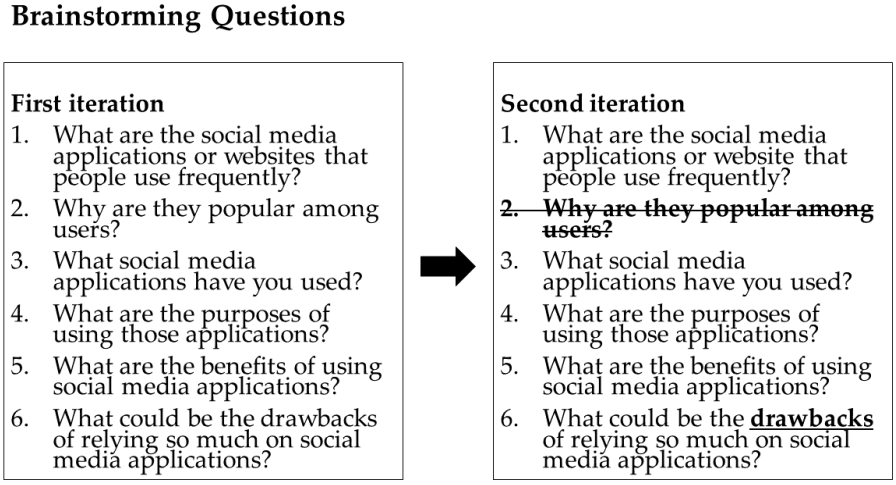


Figure 5-2 Problematic issues around brainstorming questions

5.3.2 Outcomes of tool testing: Task 2

From the pilot participants' feedback, the topic of social media applications was relevant to their daily life and watching the two excerpts contextualised the social media application issues. The positive feedback confirmed that those tools were appropriate for mediating the contexts. However, there were some issues around the content and knowledge of the argument structure to be discussed. The video clip 'Online Social Change: Easy to Organise, Hard to Win' presented a clear structure of arguments but its content which related to politics was more difficult for the pilot participants to engage with. In contrast, the content of the video clip 'How Social Media Makes Us Unsocial' was probably more relevant to the daily life of people in modern society, but the structure of the argument presented in the video clip was perhaps more complicated than in the first one.

The observations from the pilot studies indicated that the participants' unclear understanding of some unfamiliar words in the questions in Task 2 resulted in their

misinterpretations of the purpose of each question. This resulted in relatively vague answers for some of these questions. As shown in Figure 5-3, the term 'main theme' in Question 1 triggered answers which were still not specific enough to address the core ideas, for example 'the benefits of social media applications' or 'social media applications and social movements'. This suggests that, for some pilot participants, this term referred to a subject of a talk, rather than the speakers' claims. In the second iteration, it was replaced by 'major claim' which was adapted from the fundamental components of Toulmin's argument pattern[13]. It was expected that the amended question might direct the students' attention to the key messages, including the claims, that the speakers actually delivered.

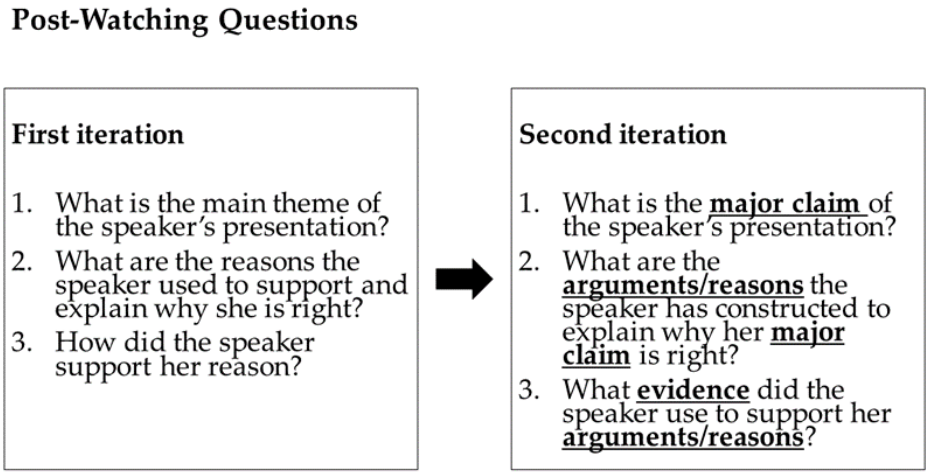


Figure 5-3 Modified post-watching questions

In addition, certain terms, more associated with Toulmin's argument pattern, including 'argument' and 'evidence', were also used in rewording the second and third questions. I realised that 'argument' and 'reason' do not have the same meaning. However, my intention to reword the question that way and to juxtapose those words was to implicitly introduce the terms that the students will come across in the subsequent tasks. The way the questions were organised was designed to inductively guide the students to the structure of an argument and facilitate a conceptualisation of

[13] In Toulmin's argument pattern (TAP), an argument is composed of three fundamental parts: claim, warrant and ground.

the structure of an argument which was consistent with the fundamental elements of Toulmin's model. The observations in the second iteration showed that some pilot participants had unclear concepts of the terms 'claim' and 'argument'. They related 'claim' to the right to ask for something and 'argument' to the process of disagreeing or quarrel. Finally, some of the pilot participants thought that Question 3 was intended to ask about the strategies that the speakers used to make their arguments sound convincing. In fact, the specific aim of the questions was to search for evidence used in the talks and implicitly guide the participants to think about the importance of using evidence to support an argument.

The pilot participants sought a second opportunity to capture the information necessary for answering the questions with a repeated watch of the video clips. In the first round of watching each excerpt, they managed to identify the speakers' major claims and capture some parts of the arguments that were made. However, the second watching provided them with another chance to capture the majority of the missing arguments and supporting evidence from the excerpts. The participants reported that the outcomes of Task 2 were achieved through discussions in which the researcher, step-by-step, elicited their thinking with questions. They noted that the assistance from the researcher played a part in encouraging them to systematically digest and organise the information. In particular, the discussions on the structure of a major claim and an argument at the end were vital in terms of encouraging them to retrospectively analyse how the speakers structured their major claims.

5.3.3 **Outcomes of tool testing: Task 3**

The instructions of Task 3 were ambiguous and demanded more clarification. The pilot participants in the first iteration were uncertain if they were required to refute the main themes (major claims) or any arguments/reasons addressed in the talks. Having the pilot participants refute any arguments according to what they have identified and acquired from the discussions in Task 2 was less likely to ensure a successful outcome. A problem in identifying the arguments, or the capture of inaccurate arguments from the excerpts in Task 2, was more likely to ensure that the pilot participants would have difficulties refuting against similar arguments in Task 3. To deal with the challenges, in

the second iteration, the pilot participants were provided with a list of arguments (see Figure 5-4). It was intended to ensure that the pilot participants had the same messages about the arguments and to facilitate the process of making refutation. Additionally, it was vital to go through each of the given arguments with the pilot participants to clarify any word or point that they might not understand.

Although the pilot participants completed a refutation of all the arguments, less than one minute for refutation against certain arguments proved to be difficult. Amongst the three arguments provided, there were certain items which the pilot participants appeared to be disengaged with and wary of challenging. They appeared to be more confident in refuting the issues which they perceived as being more relevant to their daily lives. Those issues were concerned with how social media can cause greater isolation within society and how some abbreviations used in social media are exaggerated or inadequate for self-expression. These specific issues appeared to invoke their prior knowledge and their own experiences to help construct supporting reasons for refuting the arguments. Unlike those two issues, making refutation against the argument that social media applications are powerful tools for organising social movement was more difficult for some pilot participants. This is probably because this argument was political in nature and there was a reluctance to engage with such an issue. Interestingly, many of them concurred with the opposing speakers' side in the first place, finding it difficult to adopt a different perspective for refutation. The lack of any direct experience and background knowledge about the use of social media in social movements and in refuting any argument they strongly agreed with appeared to affect their performance in this task. Essentially, this group of participants found it difficult to change their perspectives, adopt an opposite stance and refute an argument they actually agreed with. I, therefore, hoped that allowing the participants to prioritise the issues for refutation according to their preference might assist in building their confidence and create positive feelings about their performance in the task.

Practice Making a Refutation

Refutation = An attack against the interlocutor's argument

Practice making refutation of the following arguments:

1. Social media is a powerful technology that can help organise a social movement.
2. Social media causes greater isolation within society and a loss of personal intimacy between people.
3. The abbreviated vocabulary used in social media is pretentious and inadequate for self-expression.

Figure 5-4 List of arguments for refutation task

The data indicated that introducing how to make a refutation was necessary for developing the pilot participants' capacities and confidence in handling Task 3. They appeared to understand the concept of refutation. However, they revealed that they were not confident about the way they refuted during the task. According to my observations, there were some missing elements in the refutation speeches of the pilot participants. This showed that their actual capacity levels were still below a competence level that would enable them to perform refutations effectively and independently.

5.3.4 **Outcomes of tool testing: Task 4**

There were some points to be discussed concerning the format of argumentation. First, although the pilot participants had an overall picture of what debate activity looked like, five out of six pilot participants only had some limited experience in debate at a university in Thailand and one participant had never performed in debate before. The diagram which was created to communicate how the sessions of the argumentation

would flow was improved so that the speakers could better visualise their roles in the sessions.

Secondly, the pilot participants agreed with the requirement of Session 2: First Opposition, in which the opposition speaker stated counterarguments in favour of his or her resolution. In fact, Session 2 in conventional debate should create the points of disagreement in which the opposition speaker refutes the arguments offered by the proposition speaker in Session 1: First Proposition. Additionally, the chart provided an idea of how the sessions flow and the discrete responsibilities of the individual speakers in each session.

Finally, the pilot participants confirmed that making a rebuttal in the last two sessions in debate appeared to be an unfamiliar and challenging task for them. Introducing and explaining the concept of rebuttal alone was unable to ensure that the pilot participants internalised the knowledge of how to make a rebuttal in argumentation in practice. According to the observational data collected while all the pairs were engaging in debate, it was quite difficult to follow the points they were rebutting. This is because, the speakers did not restate their own arguments and the refutation articulated by the other speakers. Furthermore, the one pair was less likely to be able to handle making rebuttal in debate. To illustrate, one proposition speaker managed to rebut two points given by the opposition speaker, but she spent less than two minutes in her rebuttal session. Further, the opposition speaker did not make any rebuttal in her last session. Instead, she summarised all the arguments she had delivered in her first turn and provided solutions for the issue. This gave rise to the concern that the existing ability level of the students was less likely to enable them to readily make rebuttal autonomously. A key feature of scaffolding is associated with providing the students with more support in order to bring them closer to the level of competence so that they were able to implement making rebuttal autonomously. This requires the creation of a mediating tool which would help to foster the students' confidence and improve their abilities to the state in which they were able to independently deliver well-structured rebuttals. In addition to introducing the debate format and the roles of the speakers in

each debate session, it was necessary to provide the students with detailed practical guidelines showing them how to make a rebuttal.

5.4 Learning from the full implementation: Third iteration

The main study allowed me to exercise my judgement to discover the strengths and the limitations of the interventions for further improvements. The results from the changes that are made are discussed here and have implications for the design principles that are proposed in Chapter 8. This cycle involved the targeted participants who were thirty-eight Thai third-year undergraduates of the English as a Foreign Language programme at the Thai university. Thirty-two participants were randomly assigned into sixteen pairs. Six participants[14] formed their pairs through self-selection. The following sections describe the four tasks which were refined according to the observational data and the pilot participants' feedback on the methods. It was apparent that the participants were able to accommodate both the scaffolding tasks and debate.

5.4.1 Outcomes of tool testing: Task 1

The brainstorming in the third iteration was carried out using the similar process as in the first and second iterations. The whole process of the brainstorming repetitively undertaken with nineteen pairs was mostly done within the time limit. Each brainstorming session was undertaken in a small group, between the researcher and two participants. The testing results of the pilot studies informed the lexical problem of the brainstorming questions. The unfamiliar word 'drawback' in the question which affected some of the pilot participants' comprehension was replaced by 'disadvantage' which has been used more frequently in the local context (see Figure 5-5).

According to my observations, all the pairs took turns responding to each question. All of them not only shared their experience and opinions but also listened each other's ideas. However, the dialogues mostly took off in the direction that each participant responded to after my prompting. It was less frequent for any participants to direct

[14] These included Karina, Wanda, Shane, Paul, Kelly and Natalie.

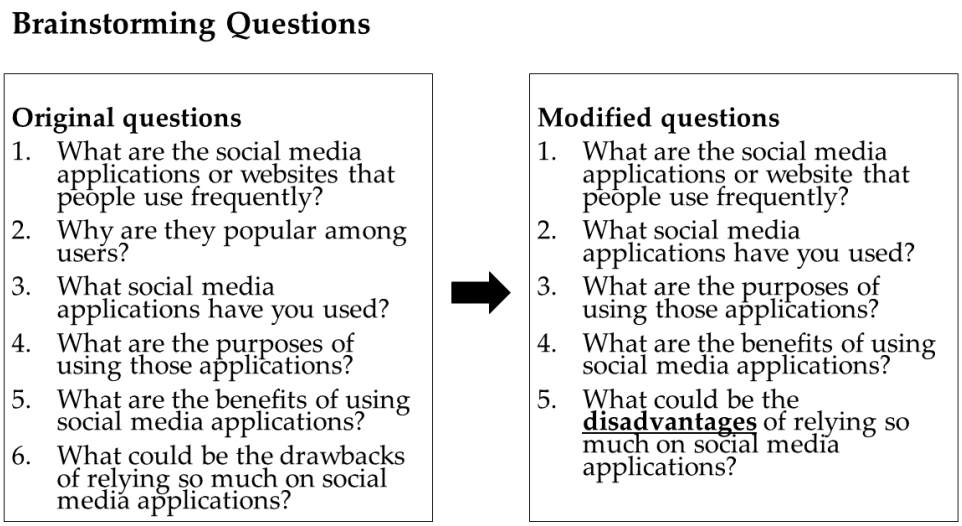


Figure 5-5 Modified brainstorming questions

their replies to the prior move of the other participants. Regardless, the five questions appeared to be able to initiate and maintain the engagement of the participants in the activity. Starting with the simplest, the first question simply elicited the participants' world knowledge with regard to the social media applications which have a global presence. All the participants responded to this question by immediately providing examples of the most popular social media applications. The participants' answers of the second and third questions clearly marked their familiarity as users of certain social media applications. All of them mainly used LINE and Facebook for instant communications and connecting with others. Their views about the positive and negative aspects associated with the use of social media applications were mainly derived from their own direct experiences and other common issues frequently reported.

5.4.2 **Outcomes of tool testing: Task 2**

The positive feedback of the pilot participants suggested that the excerpts and the modified questions could be used in this iteration. Their feedback indicated that the post-watching questions were clear enough to accommodate the answers. However, prior to having the students watch the video clips, it was essential to clarify the terms 'claim' and 'argument' in the questions to ensure that the students understood the

objective of each question. The modified edition of the worksheet is shown in Appendix 13.

According to my observations, five out of nineteen pairs were capable of identifying the major claims and some arguments with limited guidance from the researcher. Impressively, there was a pair (Tereza and Sergio) who was able to identify the major claims and some of the arguments on their own in the first round of watching the video clips. The other four pairs[15] were also able to capture the major claims in the first watching. They were able to identify some of the arguments in the second watching. The rest eventually managed to identify the major claims and the arguments after being provided with my assistance through the guided questions. Being able to correctly capture the major claims and arguments further facilitated the process in which the participants inductively conceptualised the structure of an argument.

5.4.3 **Outcomes of tool testing: Task 3**

The testing results in the pilot studies showed that the current abilities of the pilot participants were still below the level which enabled them to attain the learning objective of Task 3. In addition to giving the argument elements, the steps and examples of making refutation needed to be incorporated as scaffolding tools to support the students towards making refutation. Figure 5-6 shows the revised version of the worksheet of Task 3.

[15] These included (1) Sydney and Paris; (2) Nathan and Kate; (3) Alice and Nancy; and (4) Charlotte and Wendy.

Practice Making a Refutation

Refutation = An attack against the interlocutor's argument

4 steps for making a refutation:

1. Identify the interlocutor's argument.
   "His/her argument is social media applications are disconnecting people in society."
2. State the counterargument (opposing argument).
   "However, my refutation to this is social media applications keep people connected."
3. Provide reasons & evidence to support your counterargument/refutation.
   Explain why you disagree with the interlocutor's argument.
4. Show why your counterargument/refutation is more important than the interlocutor's argument.
   "Therefore, social media applications help establish and strengthen relationship of people, rather than disconnect people."

Adapted from:

Reading Pioneers Debate. 2016. *Debate Lesson: Refutation and Rebuttal* [online]. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6_6i-OJ_e4. [Accessed 14 October 2016].

University of Pittsburgh. 2007. *Four Steps Refutation* [online]. Available from: http://www.speaking.pitt.edu/student/argument/argumentfourstep.html [Accessed 14 October 2016].

Practice making refutation of the following arguments:

1. Social media is a powerful technology that can help organise a social movement.
2. Social media causes greater isolation within society and a loss of personal intimacy between people.
3. The abbreviated vocabulary used in social media is pretentious and inadequate for self-expression.

Figure 5-6 Modified worksheet of Task 3

According to my observations, the mediational tools designed for Task 3 appeared to provide the participants with the basic knowledge of how to make a refutation. The performance of the participants in Task 3 showed that the knowledge which had already been internalised was likely to be transferred to their mediated actions in the task. For example, Charlotte's except below clearly indicated her ability to apply the knowledge of refutation she had already acquired into the task. Charlotte's refutation

statement consists of an identified argument, her counterargument, a reason, evidence and a concluding statement, as guided on the worksheet.

Task 3: Making Refutation

[Charlotte] *Her argument is social media is a powerful technology that can help organise a social movement* **(identified argument).** *However, my refutation is that social media can help control a social movement* **(counterargument)**. *This is because sometime when news is going viral, there are both positive and negative effect on the country. So it is going to be easier to use technology to control a social movement* **(reason)**. *According to a big city like China, the Communist Government also controls broadcasting and use technology to control people to follow their direction. This is how China which has the highest population in the world organises and controls their people and becomes the most influential country in the world* **(evidence)**. *Therefore, social media can empower the government to control social movement* **(concluding statement)**.

Although all of the participants seemed to follow the guideline of how to make refutation, some elements were absent in the structures of their refutations. Overall, the majority of the participants' refutations started with identified arguments. Then they stated their counterarguments and used reasons to support their counterarguments. An evidence and a concluding statement were not frequently included in the participants' refutation statements. According to the observational data, only five participants[16] provided evidence to support their counterarguments and only three participants[17]concluded their refutations by showing why their counterarguments were stronger. The following excepts exhibited the absence of evidence or a concluding statement or both evidence and concluding statement from the cohort's refutation statements.

Task 3: Making Refutation

[Wendy] *The speaker's argument is social media causes greater isolation within society* ***(identified argument)***. *In contrast, social media helps connect people together who live far way* ***(counterargument)***. *For example, we know disaster or what happened in other countries which is located the other side of the world and able to give our hands to help people in need even I am in different part of the world* ***(reason)***. *Therefore, social media helps people become closer* ***(concluding statement)***.

[16] These included Sally, Pam, Page, Ted and Charlotte.

[17] These included Rosie, Tulip and Charlotte.

Task 3: Making Refutation

[Sebastian] *The speaker's argument is social media causes greater isolation within society* ***(identified argument)****. However, my refutation to this is social media creates closer relationship* ***(counterargument)****. When people are far away, they use Facebook or other social media applications to keep in touch instead of using emails or letters* ***(reason)****. For example, Skype can make you see somebody's face like you are close to each other* ***(evidence)****.*

Task 3: Making Refutation

[Shane] *The speaker's argument is social media causes greater isolation within society* ***(identified argument)****. However, my refutation is social media is an effective tool to help people easily communicate with each other* ***(counterargument)****. For example, people in Asia can connect with people in America easily in just a few minutes* ***(reason)****.*

Another issue was concerned with the content of the argument items. Eleven participants[18] were unable to make refutation against all three argument elements. To elucidate, six participants[19] deliberately avoided making refutation against the argument which was concerned with social movements and politics. Four participants[20] skipped the argument which asserted that the abbreviations used in the social applications were exaggerated or sometimes inadequate for self-expression. However, thirty-seven participants, except for Nadia, were able to make refutation against the second argument which addressed the negative effect of social media applications on the loss of social intimacy between people.

5.4.4 **Outcomes of tool testing: Task 4**

My learnings on the debate from the pilot studies indicated a requirement for improving the diagram of the debate format. The improvement was intended to provide better visualisation for the roles of the speakers in the sessions they performed

[18] These included Wanda, Karina, Nala, Paula, Paris, Sydney, Nadine, Sabrina, Tam, Priya and Alice.

[19] This group included Wanda, Karina, Nala, Paula, Paris and Sydney.

[20] These included Sabrina, Tam, Paris and Elise.

in. To do so, the directions of the arrows were reversed in accordance with the speakers' angles (see Figure 5-7).

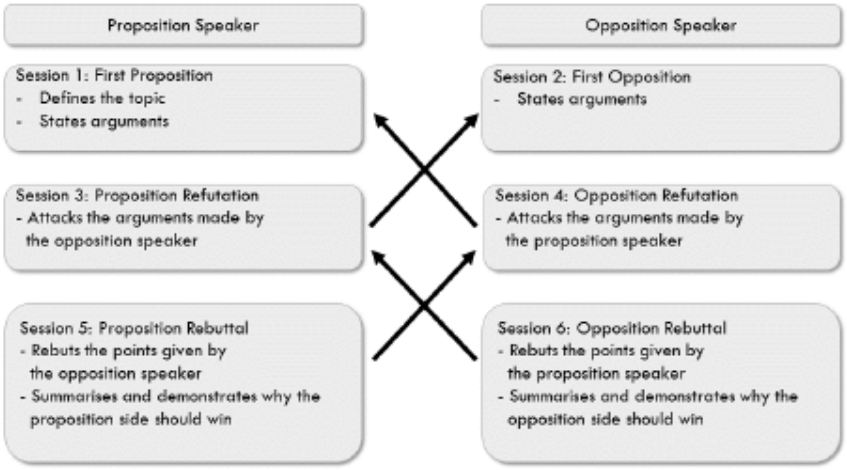
Debate Activity
กิจกรรมโต้วาที

Topic: Do the benefits of social media applications/websites outweigh the disadvantages?

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

In completing this task, you will be involved in debate. In pairs, one of you will be assigned to a proposition position, the other will be assigned to the opposition position. Each speaker constructs arguments for and against issues relevant to the topic. The proposition and the opposition speakers will have an equal amount of time and equal opportunities to present their arguments, refute the points made by the opponent, and defend their claims and arguments.
สำหรับกิจกรรมโต้วาทีนี้ ในจำนวนผู้อภิปราย 2 คน ผู้อภิปรายคนหนึ่งจะเป็นฝ่ายเสนอและอีกคนหนึ่งจะเป็นฝ่ายค้าน แต่ละคนจะอภิปรายเพื่อสนับสนุนหรือคัดค้านในประเด็นตามญัตติหรือหัวข้อการอภิปราย ผู้อภิปรายจะมีเวลาในการเตรียมตัวเท่ากัน รวมทั้งมีโอกาสเท่าเทียมกันในการนำเสนอประเด็น คัดค้านประเด็นของผู้อภิปรายฝ่ายตรงข้าม และโต้แย้งเพื่อปกป้องประเด็นที่ตนเองได้นำเสนอ

Debate Format



Each session lasts 5 minutes.

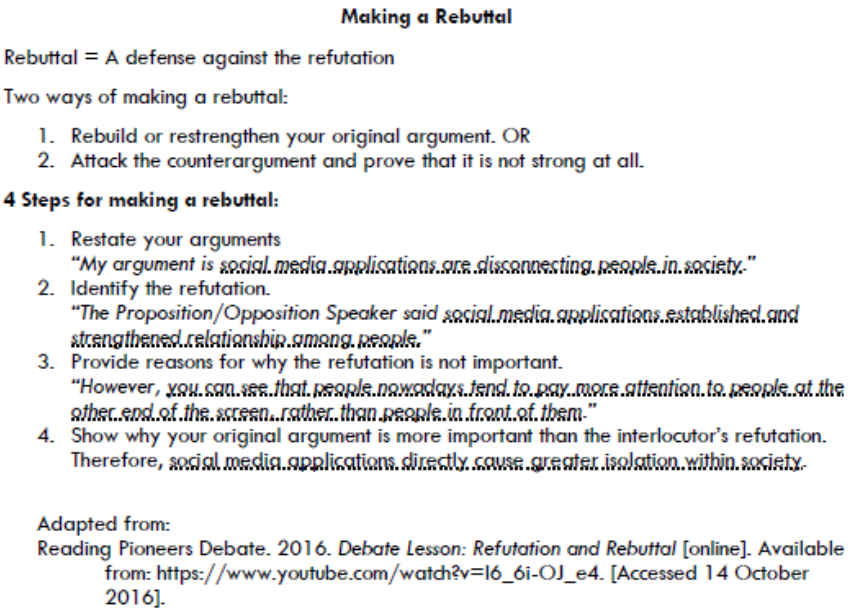
Roles of Speakers

Session 1: First Proposition
In the first proposition stage, the proposition speaker is expected to define the discussion topic and the case and deliver the complete set of arguments in favour of his or her resolution.
ในรอบแรกฝ่ายเสนอจะต้องให้คำจำกัดความตามญัตติการโต้วาที กำหนดบริบทหรือกรณีตัวอย่าง พร้อมทั้งหยิบยกประเด็นต่างๆขึ้นมาเพื่อสนับสนุนความคิดของตนเอง

- 1 -

Figure 5-7 Modified diagram of debate format

In addition, the participants did not seem to perform rebuttals independently. Taking the results, the brief guidelines alone appeared to be inadequate for supporting the students towards the sequence of making rebuttals. Therefore, the steps and examples of making rebuttals were included in the scaffolding process and the introduction was carried out prior to having the students perform debate (see Figure 5-8).



Making a Rebuttal

Rebuttal = A defense against the refutation

Two ways of making a rebuttal:

1. Rebuild or restrengthen your original argument. OR
2. Attack the counterargument and prove that it is not strong at all.

4 Steps for making a rebuttal:

1. Restate your arguments
   "My argument is social media applications are disconnecting people in society."
2. Identify the refutation.
   "The Proposition/Opposition Speaker said social media applications established and strengthened relationship among people."
3. Provide reasons for why the refutation is not important.
   "However, you can see that people nowadays tend to pay more attention to people at the other end of the screen, rather than people in front of them."
4. Show why your original argument is more important than the interlocutor's refutation.
   Therefore, *social media applications directly cause greater isolation within society.*

Adapted from:
Reading Pioneers Debate. 2016. *Debate Lesson: Refutation and Rebuttal* [online]. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6_6i-OJ_e4. [Accessed 14 October 2016].

Figure 5-8 Steps for making rebuttal

In analysing the debate, I looked for evidence in the transcripts of their exchanges, of the participants' ability to follow the structure of an argument in their debate rather than evaluating the quality of the arguments. The evidence from the transcripts of the debate indicated that all the participants applied the knowledge of the structure of a major claim and an argument provided through the scaffolding tasks in the proposition or opposition session. When dividing their statements into segments and examining each segment according to the structure of a major claim and an argument, it was found that not all the segments contained all the fundamental elements. Twenty-four participants made efforts to include some supporting details and evidence in some of their arguments while twelve participants never supported their arguments with any evidence. The following are two excerpts which were divided into segments and coded using the structure of a major claim and an argument as the guideline. The

excerpts showed that the participants had internalised the structure of a major claim and an argument and were able to mobilise this knowledge in a formal debate format.

Session 1: Proposition

[Paul] *People can obtain benefits from using social media in several ways.* **(major claim).** *First they can connect with other people all around the world in a few minutes* **(argument)** *…. In the first benefit, social media provides convenient to people and save their time so much since they can talk or chat with other people easily. For example, I can connect with my parents who staying in Bangkok easily and share experience to each other conveniently* **(evidence)…**

Session 2: Opposition

[Wanda] *It's true that social media provides us many advantages. But, actually, there are many, a lot of hidden disadvantages* **(major claim)***…. social media can affect your health* **(argument)**. *Ok, according to the statistics that people nowadays use social media a lot. They are keeping their eyes on screen, and, of course, it have to affect them, affect their health. For example, do you know ADHD? ADHD or Attention Deficit Hyperact…Ok, especially, occur with the children When children keep their eyes on the screen a lot for a lo of time, of course, they can get, they can become, like they can have ADHD condition And for the adult, when they use a smartphone for a long time, looking at their smartphone for a long time, especially, in the night time, right? So they can get temporaril blind. According to the research that I have searched, they said that here are many people that get, that went to temporarily blind after they are looking at the screen at much* **(evidence)**.

Although the participants were able to perform in the refutation and rebuttal sessions, the transcripts reported a low use of evidence as a supporting element in making refutations and rebuttals. Only six participants[21] refuted the opposite speakers' arguments by backing their refutation with supporting details and evidence. Seven participants[22] elaborated their refutation with more information, but no supporting evidence. Twenty-five participants offered refutation and elaborated their points without supporting evidence. Wendy's coded excerpt below includes refutation, supporting details and evidence.

[21] This group included Wanda, Sally, Tam, Priya, Wendy and Tim.

[22] These included Sage, Roger, Nicole, Patricia, Nancy, Charlotte and Natalie.

Session 4: Opposition Refutation

[Wendy] *And the third one that you said social media makes life safer and more convenient. I would like to share my opinion that I think social media make lives like less safer* **(refutation)**. *It could be like more dangerous because what do you, like a children absorb bad things from social media without scanning from parents and they might follow in what the action in the social media that they absorb* **(supporting details)**. *Or I heard some news that a girl was kidnapped some guy by talking or texting, so it is bad, a bad effects from social media also* **(evidence)**.

In the last two sessions which involved making rebuttals, the transcripts showed that eight participants[23] made rebuttals with supporting details and evidence. Three participants[24] also used evidence to back their rebuttals. However, they did not provide supporting details. The structure of a rebuttal is identified in Patricia's excerpt below.

Session 4: Opposition Rebuttal

[Patricia] *The point that you give me to oppose me is that people when they alone the use the social media to express their feeling through the social network, right? But if you go in that alone talking to people, go commenting their ideas, don't you think that is that a real feeling of the people to comment that... And I think that hearing the voice is the important than texting or sending the sticker* **(refutation)**. *Something like you hear the voice of friend, it may be better than just seeing the sticker, but because it is not your real feeling. When you feel so sad or maybe your friend will feel so very disappointed, so, and she send you a text that I feel very sad. Will you send a sticker "Hang in there!" or you will call her instead* **(supporting details)**? **details)**?... *For example, when the exam is coming and you feel disappointed on your exam, and you post on Facebook that the exam was very hard. Then the mother call you. You will feel better than she gave the sticker or comment on your Facebook, right?* **(evidence)**…

5.5 **Conclusion**

Interaction within the oppositional format of debate requires not only the construction of legitimate arguments but also the use of language and communication skills in order to persuade interlocutors and target audience. The modified debate format was intended to ensure the application of counterargument and the so-called secondary Toulmin elements, such as rebuttal and refutation.

Performing debate was set as the level of potential development at which the participants were required to achieve in this research study. As debate might be an unfamiliar task for some students, the scaffolding tasks were necessary for providing

[23] These included Wanda, Shannon, Adele, Shane, Patricia, Sydney, Nathan and Natalie.

[24] These included Paula, Beatrix, and Tim.

them with assistance in performing debate independently. Functioning as the mediational tool for scaffolding the argumentation skills necessary for debate, the knowledge of the basic structure of a major claim and an argument was explicitly introduced to the participants in Task 2. However, possessing knowledge of the argument structures alone was unlikely to be adequate to ensure that the students would be able to carry out independent debate efficiently. Task 3 was developed to introduce the steps of making a refutation and allow the students to familiarise themselves with challenging the interlocutors' arguments, which is a prominent characteristic of debate. It was anticipated that having the participants make refutations against their interlocutors' arguments would provoke certain conditions in which they activated and recalled the knowledge of the argument structures that they had encountered in Task 2. Further, the interactions between the researcher and the participants and the peers throughout the learning activities, such as brainstorming and the post-watching of video clips, were additional tools to introduce to the topic of debate and other scaffolding tasks and activate the students' background knowledge and vocabulary. Most importantly, the tools were designed to facilitate the process of internalisation. Of course, the knowledge by itself will be less likely to create any real impact if the participants never utilise the knowledge they have acquired in the given context.

The observational data and the transcripts indicated that the participants applied the knowledge of the structure of a major claim and an argument in performing debate. However, the characteristics and the format of debate were challenging for the participants. In the first two sessions - the First Proposition and First Opposition - all the participants structured their talks to contain a major claim and argument. However, not all of them were fully able to deliver their arguments in the refutation sessions, despite the structure of refutations having been introduced in the scaffolding tasks. Furthermore, more than half of the participants were not fully able to make rebuttals in carrying out the task immediately on their own. Clearly students found the processes of challenging others' ideas particularly difficult.

Based on my observations and field notes during the trials of these tools, it appears that more scaffolding in these secondary Toulmin elements is required if students are to learn argumentation skills. My next chapter discusses the students' own perceptions and experiences of the task as a way of corroborating my observations. In chapter 7, I then go on to discuss how students' cultural and social backgrounds might provide one explanation for these findings.

Chapter 6 Students' experiences of debate and scaffolding tasks

6.1 Overview

Chapter 5 focused on the design, development, testing and refining of the mediational tools for fostering the argumentation skills of students and implementing debate. Chapter 6 reports on the reflections of thirty-eight participants in the main study on these experiences. The data set includes the qualitative data produced through the semi-structure interviews and data from the five-point Likert scale questionnaires (utilised as a method of triangulation of the qualitative data). The analysis of the interview data presented in this chapter was performed on distinct sections of the data which manifested itself in the participants' reflections on the mediational tools. The data that was reported in this chapter was representative of the whole group and offered significant insights, even though it emerged from fewer participants.

As discussed in the methodology, the participants in the third iteration were thirty-eight third-year undergraduates in the EFL programme at a university in Thailand. Twenty-seven participants were female, and eleven were male. Although the concept of debate was widely recognised amongst the students, twenty-six participants or, approximately, 68%, had no experience in any debate or debate-like activity. Seven participants had some experiences in debate-like activities in English classrooms, however, those activities were part of the core content of their respective courses. One participant had attended a two-day debate workshop and four had some direct experience in debate competitions. The questionnaire data showed that, nineteen out of thirty-eight, or 50% of the participants, were lacking in confidence, to some extent, about their argumentation skills.

As indicated, I also wished to understand the students' perceptions of whether the interventions supported their development of argumentation skills. To do so, thematic analysis was employed to inductively construct meanings from the views of the students about their direct experiences in the tasks or the major issues raised in the interviews. I extensively reviewed the thirty-eight interview transcripts of the participants' first-hand experiences of the tasks to construct a number of themes that

were collated, analysed and categorised, with the most frequently occurring categories formed into themes and sub-themes. Consequently, the themes that are discussed in this chapter are grouped under three elements, including (1) emotional issues, (2) knowledge and understanding issues and (3) critical thinking and argumentation issues.

6.2 Emotional issues

In this part I review the emotions[25] the participants experienced prior to, during and after the task events. The data strongly suggest that the emotions of a significant number of participants extensively impacted their motives and self-confidence. Three major themes emerged in relation to emotions, including the impact of student anxieties, the significance of peer relationships and the importance of topic interest.

6.2.1 Students' anxiety and performance in debate

The preferences of many participants for engaging in debate and their performances were substantially influenced by their emotional states. These emotions shaped their reasoning and actions; for example, how much they wanted to participate in debate, what they did in debate, how they did it and how well they performed in debate. Further, the theme of anxiety[26] was a recurring feature in the interview data set. According to the questionnaire data, around 84% of the participants were of the opinion that their participation in the activities was meaningful to them. Concomitantly, 42% of the participants had strong feelings of concern about engaging in debate. Likewise, the interview data reported that twenty-two participants[27] were apprehensive and worried about their self-confidence at various states during debate.

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[25] The term 'emotion' involves preconscious social expressions of feelings emerging from the interaction of subjective and objective factors (Massumi, 2002; Shouse, 2005; Munezero *et al.*, 2014). It generates cognitive processes because it is capable of becoming conscious upon recall. As it can be genuine or feigned, sometimes it is contrived to meet a social or cultural expectation. It also leads to expressive, adaptive or goal-directed behaviour (Munezero *et al.*, 2014).

[26] Scovel (1976) defined anxiety as one affective variable among several intrinsic learner variables. 'Debilitating anxiety' hinders the effective performance of language learners. 'Facilitating anxiety' drives learners to try harder and perform better in a task.

[27] These included Tam, Sally, Nala, Sage, Shane, Paul, Beatrix, Sebastian, Patricia, Nicole, Paris, Nathan, Sydney, Kate, Charlotte, Wendy, Kelly, Natalie, Tereza, Sergio, Tim and Page.

Further, their perceptions suggested that there were some whose motivation and performance were negatively influenced at an emotional level by the activity environments, while others were intellectual risk-takers despite the provided conditions of the activities. The examples of excerpts show how anxiety impacted the participants' confidence in their capacity to effectively debate.

> *After I had learned that I was required to do debate, I was worried about whether or not I was able to handle it. My first thought about debate was that it involved heated argumentation and looked difficult. Personally, I avoid argumentation and interrupting my interlocutors. [Sally]*
>
> *I was a bit shocked after I had learned that I needed to perform in debate. I thought that my English speaking skills were not so fluent that would allow me to do this. [Kate]*
>
> *I was worried about carrying out debate because I have never done this before and I had no idea about what I would do when an opposite speaker challenged me. [Natalie]*

In contrast, what might be identified as 'facilitating anxiety'[28] appeared to encourage six participants[29] to engage in debate. The participants with this sort of positive anxiety desired to see how well they were able to handle debate and achieve it. As Wanda stated:

> *Prior to my participation in this research project, I thought that the researcher would have high expectation and I needed to deal with a foreigner. Importantly, debate would be difficult. However, my close friend said that I had a capacity to do it. I thought she was right. I made up my mind to volunteer in this project and I wanted to see how well I would be able to deal with debate. Despite its difficulties, I told myself "Hang in there!" [Wanda]*

Despite their concern about debate, nineteen participants[30] determined that they wished to participate. Amongst this group, thirteen participants[31] viewed that it was an opportunity for them to gain a new learning experience. The following statements

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[28] Unlike other research studies in the area of psychology, this research was not intended to measure and classify the anxiety of students. The terms 'facilitating anxiety' and 'debilitating anxiety' in this research are defined informally as a positive anxiety that drives the participants' engagement in activities and as a negative anxiety that affects the participants motives and actions in activities, respectively.

[29] The participants with facilitating anxiety included Wanda, Karina, Nadine, Paris, Nancy and Kelly.

[30] These included Wanda, Tam, Sally, Nala, Priya, Paul, Sebastian, Patricia, Paris, Nathan, Kate, Nancy, Charlotte, Wendy, Kelly, Natalie, Tereza, Tim and Page.

[31] These included Tam, Nala, Priya, Patricia, Paris, Kate, Nancy, Wendy, Kelly, Natalie, Tereza, Tim and Page.

demonstrated that these students were open to a new and positive learning opportunity despite their anxiety.

> *I thought my experience in the activities was like participating in a workshop which offered me a new learning experience. After I knew that the activities included debate, I was a bit worried because I had no idea about how to debate. It was my first time that I performed debate. [Tam]*
>
> *I think the activities were interesting. After I had learned that the activities included debate, I told myself that I should try what I didn't want to do. It was like trying to overcome my own fear. On top of that, I wanted to know what the debate task was like. [Paris]*

Apart from being an opportunity for learning, six participants[32] viewed their participation in debate as an opportunity to improve their proficiency in English despite a lack of confidence in performing debate. The interview data indicated that this cohort were keen to seek an opportunity to practice their English-speaking skills outside their English classrooms. For example, Sally regarded the engagement in debate as the opportunity to evaluate how well the abilities she possessed contributed to her performance in the task and Sebastian viewed it as the way to improve his English language ability outside of the classroom.

> *I wanted to see how well I was able to deal with debate. I think it was interesting and directly beneficial to me, as a student at the EFL programme. I wanted to do it. Previously, I was quite worried over my ability to perform debate. The task I visualised was all about heatedly arguing and sounded difficult. Normally, I avoid arguing with people and interrupting a conversation. I thought that if I was involved in debate, I wouldn't be able to win any argument. [Sally]*
>
> *I thought the activities were very interesting. I viewed that it was an opportunity to use English language skills I had acquired outside the classroom. Moreover, it was my first time to perform debate. I thought this was the way to improve my ability, especially when I was in the real situation… I felt nervous and worried that I wouldn't be able to perform debate. This is because it was an unfamiliar task to me. [Sebastian]*

Thirty-three codes generated from twenty-eight informants who had anxiety about debate provided evidence that their anxiety was provoked by two major factors: learner-related and task-related factors. The learner-related factors were associated with concerns over their own or their peers' levels of English language proficiency (see

[32] These included Wanda, Sally, Paul, Sebastian, Nathan and Charlotte.

Section 6.2.1.1). The task-related factors related to the speech-genre of debate and concerns over the debate topic (see Sections 6.2.1.2 and 6.2.1.3). Figure 6-1 depicts the percentages of the participants with anxiety about debate and the percentages of the factors for anxiety.

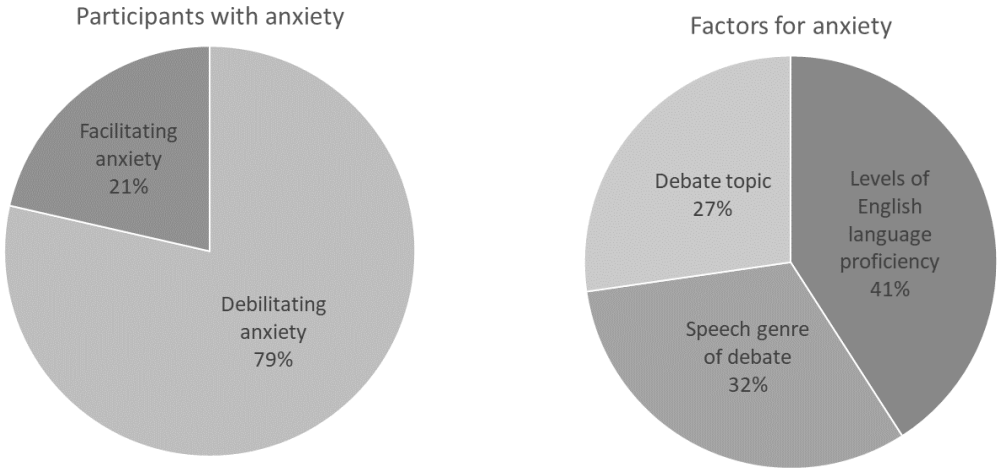

Figure 6-1 Percentage of students with anxiety and the factors for anxiety

6.2.1.1 Anxiety over levels of English language proficiency

According to the data, nine participants[33] believed that they possessed relatively low levels of English language proficiency. This belief negatively affected their self-confidence and provoked anxiety in performing debate. For example:

> *I was worried that I wouldn't be able to capture what my interlocutor said. Moreover, I thought that I might not be able to effectively and accurately communicate in English. I had never done any debate-like activity before. I felt a bit nervous… [Sebastian]*
>
> *I was worried about my English language skills more than ideas and content. What if I couldn't recall some words or organise sentences during debate. [Charlotte]*
>
> *I wasn't confident that I spoke English with accuracy. I was worried about producing ungrammatical sentences. [Sergio]*

Concerns over the English-speaking skills of their peers was another factor for some of the participants' feelings of anxiety. The suspected higher levels of English proficiency of the partner they were to be paired with appeared to make the other participants feel inferior and undermine their confidence in their own speaking capacity. The data

[33] These included Shane, Paul, Sebastian, Kate, Charlotte, Tereza, Sergio, Tim and Page.

showed that ten participants[34] felt worried about the interlocutors that they were paired with in debate. The different levels of English language proficiency of the students in a dyadic interaction triggered anxiety in those participants who perceived themselves as learners with lower levels of English language proficiency. For example:

> *I was really anxious about whom I had to argue with. If that person is a very strong student, he or she will definitely possess the skills in debate. [Patricia]*
>
> *I was worried because I felt like my English-speaking skills aren't as good as my interlocutor. I was afraid that I would not be able to catch what she said. In debate, in which we needed to attack an opposite speaker's arguments and defended ours, I wasn't confident that I would be able to deal with my interlocutor's performance. [Sally]*
>
> *I was anxious because my interlocutor's speaking skill in English is fluent and she's confident. She's not shy to ask questions in the classrooms. My English-speaking skills are not as good as hers…. [Nadine]*

This anxiety appeared to be mostly absent in situations where dyads of participants with similar levels of English language proficiency were paired. For example, two participants (Shannon and Adele), who were strong students, appeared to admire each other's English proficiency and expressed their satisfaction in working with each other. This suggests that some participants would be less anxious if they were paired with partners who tended to have similar levels of English proficiency and skills. Shannon's interview excerpt demonstrated this view:

> *I think I would enjoy the activities for sure. As far as I know, Adele's English proficiency level is high. She is not a talkative person. I know Adele a bit more after having collaboratively worked with her in the classrooms. We had the opportunities to share and exchange our views. I think I have learnt something from her too.*

Some participants perceived themselves as learners with an inadequate capacity to communicate in English. Considering how anxiety in association with English language proficiency mediated some participants' perspectives about carrying out debate, performance in debate using English is likely to be relatively difficult for certain students, especially those who perceived themselves as learners with a poor language proficiency. Anxiety caused from their perceived sense of the interlocutors'

[34] These included Sally, Ted, Patrick, Patricia, Nicole, Alice, Nancy, Charlotte, Tereza and Nadine.

higher abilities in mediating performance in English also influenced and concreted their perspectives on debate as challenging. Both concerns triggered anxiety which had a negative impact on this group's capacity, confidence, enthusiasm and enjoyment in debate. These perspectives enforced the participants' fear of being embarrassed and losing face in front of their peers.

6.2.1.2 Anxiety over speech genre of debate

Anxiety was also provoked by the fundamental characteristics of debate. Seven participants[35] were anxious about their performance in debate because they regarded debate as a conflictual, competitive and a formal speech genre. A number of participants reported their preferences to avoid confrontation with others and their limited exposure to this kind of speech genre emphasised their unfamiliarity with the nature of debate. The following opinions demonstrated that the characteristics of the task appeared to create an unease amongst this group of participants:

> *To be honest, I was a bit worried about debate because it sounded tense. I had to refute the interlocutor's arguments and rebut his or her points within the limited time. It differed from casual conversation which I expressed my personal opinions based on my feelings. I had to gather information required for my performance. [Nathan]*

> *The debate task looked academic. I was a bit nervous. I had to do my best and make sure that my English spoken language didn't sound too casual… I felt like I participated in a debate competition which made me nervous and anxious. [Sage]*

> *I, personally, don't like confrontation and arguing with others. I know that the activities involved arguing with reasons rather than pure emotions. Although there were emotions involved, I don't think I took them personally. [Tam]*

It is also worth noting how some of the participants were apprehensive about a face-to-face confrontation in debate. Debate is associated with both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication and emotions. Speakers can use emotive language and none-verbal expressions in order to heighten their arguments and reduce the validity of the other speaker's arguments. Macagno and Walton (2014) assert that the use of emotive language takes place in conversational argumentation on matters people discuss and argue about, especially when the speaker intends to gain advantages over the opposing

[35] These included Tam, Sally, Sage, Paris, Nathan, Kate and Natalie.

speaker. In this connection, the characteristics of debate can lead to a tension between the speakers. Plantin (2004) contends that in debate situations the participants can become deeply engaged in their speech and can experience doubt, uneasiness, impatience and irritation against a competing possibility embodied in the opposite speakers' arguments. Additionally, participants can experience feelings of either humiliation or triumph.

This speech genre shaped the setting in which the debate occurred. The argumentative and competitive nature of debate made the participants feel anxious. According to Scovel (1976), anxiety can facilitate performance, especially when the task is relative undemanding. In contrast, it can also debilitate performance when the task is more difficult. In this regard, although anxiety was occasionally positive and encouraged some students to participate in the new learning activities, the anxiety which was caused by the characteristics of debate itself led to a reduction of some participants' confidence in dealing with debate, especially those who were anxious due to the lack of knowledge and experience in this speech genre.

6.2.1.3 Anxiety over debate topic

Apart from the nature of debate, another factor for anxiety was associated with the debate topic. This issue appeared to be a significant factor in determining some participants' abilities to demonstrate their thoughts. Familiarity with the topic allowed these participants to utilise and integrate their background knowledge into content preparation and the construction of in-depth arguments. Conversely, the views of six learners[36] confirmed that an unknown topic (cited below as an 'unseen topic'), as well as a complicated topic, caused anxiety in their participation in debate. The data clearly showed that the participants considered their prior knowledge and content preparation as one of the significant factors for the task accomplishment. For example:

> *I, personally, don't like participating in any activities which involve an unseen topic or a topic which goes beyond my understanding. I was worried about lacking ideas and knowledge related to the topic. [Beatrix]*

[36] These included Beatrix, Sydney, Wendy, Kelly, Sergio and Tim.

> *Debate sounded difficult for me. I was worried about the topic for discussion and how much I knew about it. To be able to perform in debate, knowledge of the topic was definitely required. [Kelly]*

In summary, the emotion of anxiety was connected to the way the participants engaged in debate. The anxiety the participants had was obvious and inseparable from the way they internalised their participation in debate, a condition Vygotsky called the 'affective-volitional' basis of thought (Vygotsky, 1986). Although debilitating anxiety negatively affected a particular group's motives and confidence in performing debate, facilitating anxiety drove another cohort's positive views of embracing learning despite unfamiliar and challenging contexts. Some learners, despite their anxiety, described an enthusiasm for gaining a new learning experience and improving self-development. These characteristics are consistent with the observations made in Vygotsky's discussion of the learning process in 'Educational Psychology'. Vygotsky's statements below declared that an individual's process of learning occurred when that person made sense of new learning circumstances and situations.

> Just as you cannot learn how to swim by standing at the seashore… to learn how to swim you have to, out of necessity, plunge right into the water even though you still don't know how to swim so the only way to learn something, say, how to acquire knowledge is by doing so, in other words, by acquiring knowledge. (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 324, cited in Daniels, 2001, p. 35)

Historically, the role of emotions has tended to be understated in L2 learning and subjugated by studies on cognition. Schutz and Pekrun (2007, p. 3) argued, "in spite of the emotional nature of classrooms, inquiry on emotions in educational contexts, outside of a few notable exceptions…has been slow to emerge". One of the factors for why emotion has not been emphasised in L2 learning is likely to be related to the difficulties associated with its measurement. It is reasonable to ask what is an emotion and how it can be measured? Swain (2013, p. 197) suggests "an individual's level of anxiety - related to such emotions as fear, frustration, and apprehension – is seen as a measurable variable which causes failure in learning a target language". She suggests that anxiety is recognised as a phenomenon in L2 learning, where is it termed as foreign language anxiety, because it is more readily seen to be measurable. Certainly, there is a sizeable amount of literature on foreign language anxiety (e.g. Young, 1992;

Horwitz, 2010; Effiong, 2016). However, Imai (2010) contends that other emotions, such as excitement, envy, jealousy, boredom, admiration, enjoyment and shame are understated because they are more difficult to define and measure. Clearly, establishing the boundaries and variables associated with emotions is a complex task.

Magiolino (2010, cited in Mesquita, 2012) informs us that Vygotsky makes use of a range of expressions to describe a similar experience, including passion, affection and feeling, along with emotion itself. The matter is further complicated by the process of translation from the original Russian. In an earlier work, Vygotsky (1999) criticised the tendency in psychology to separate cognition, or intellect, from affection. He stated:

> Admitting that thought depends on the affection is not much to do, we need to go further, go from metaphysical study to the historical study of phenomena: it is necessary to examine the relationship between intellect and affection, and the relationship of these with the social signs… (p. 121)

This posits in what way Vygotsky considered how intellect was inseparable from emotion. Although there is no theoretical body of work centred on emotion, or affection, it is clear that Vygotsky regarded it as integral to his theory. Indeed, in another work he referred to "the existence of a dynamic system of meaning in which the affective and intellectual unite"(Vygotsky, 1986 p. 10). Building upon Vygotsky, other commentators have suggested that emotion and cognition "may unite and enhance each other to yield an outcome greater than either of them alone" (Del Rio and Álvarez, 2002; p. 65).

There can be no doubt that emotion played a significant part in the learning progression in this study, especially considering how debate was a new learning experience for many students. This observation can be exemplified by examining the process. To begin with, the debate speech genre shaped the setting. The characteristics and the requirements of debate made learners aware of their own English language proficiency and the suspected higher English proficiency of their interlocutors which were necessary for mediating their performance in debate. Further, how to deal with debate, a discourse which was unfamiliar to the majority of participants, and the extent to which a debate topic facilitated content preparation was also a novel experience for

most of the participants. These learner-related and task-related factors provoked anxiety, which generated a fear of failure in over half of the participants. However, facilitating anxiety, which could be associated with emotions such as determination, seemed to be a significant drive for some participants to enter into this unfamiliar and challenging environment in order to learn new skills and build capacities. In short, the characteristics and format of debate shaped the learning setting and provoked anxiety in many participants. Anxiety had both a positive and negative impact on the way the participants mediated their engagement in debate.

6.2.2 **Peer relationships**

Central to Vygotsky's theory is the importance of social interaction activities between people for the development of higher mental functions and the role of the mediators. However, he did not appear to provide any detailed account of what kind of relationship would be suitable for promoting the ZPD[37]. The findings in relation to the participants' anxieties[38] over their interlocutors led to a further analysis of the interview data regarding the impact of the actual relations between the participants on their actions in debate.

Peer relationships have a significant capacity to influence the participants' motives and desires to carry out debate and benefit from the activity. The importance of peer interplay was illustrated in the interview transcripts of five participants[39] who asked for self-pairing. Moreover, fifteen participants[40] expressed their appreciation for being randomly paired with their close friends or acquainted partners. Certain features that illustrate the impact of peer relationships on the participants' affective motivation in

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[37] Vygotsky's theory has been further developed by Rogoff (1995) whose concept of 'guided participation', the interpersonal plane of sociocultural analysis corresponding to personal, interpersonal and community processes, extended the ideas about the participation of individuals with others in culturally organised activities. The guided participation plane emphasises the process of hands-on, mutual involvement between individuals and their social partners in activities in which the objectives are aligned via social and cultural values.

[38] We might term this 'debilitating anxiety' – however I did not conduct the tests necessary to make this a technical definition. In this thesis, then, I use this term informally without making claim to this as a technical assessment.

[39] These included Karina, Shane, Paul, Kelly and Natalie.

[40] These included Nadine, Pam, Nala, Priya, Paula, Paris, Sydney, Nathan, Rosie, Tulip, Wendy, Tereza, Sergio, Tim and Page.

debate emerged from the interview data. First, many of the participants preferred familiar relationships between peers as they felt that this fostered a friendly and supportive atmosphere. This made the participants feel more relaxed and negated any 'loss of face' during debate. Interestingly, this concern over a loss of face could also be associated with a fear of embarrassing another interlocutor, as well as oneself. The following interview excerpts showed their appreciation for working with familiar peers.

> *Pairing up with my close friend made me feel less nervous, compared to working with other students despite they are also third-year cohort. This is because I was worried that I would feel uncomfortable to ask for a clarification when I was unsure about what my interlocutor said. In my opinion, it is all about the level of relationships. I think I performed better when working with my close friends. [Karina]*

> *Being randomly paired with whom I was not familiar would be problematic to me…. My close friend, Paula, knows me well. She explained the points I didn't understand. Paula gave me her moral support during my performance in debate. If I worked with someone else, that person wouldn't care me that much. He or she would probably keep talking without paying attention when I struggled. [Priya]*

> *The interlocutor and I were relatively close. I enjoyed the activities. If I had been provided with an opportunity to choose my own interlocutor, I would have worked with friend that I felt familiar with. This made me feel more comfortable with the task. [Nathan]*

The excerpts indicated that peer relationships established the context of collaboration. These factors played a role in the ZPD, which was formulated within a context where a more competent person works in collaboration with a less competent individual. Indeed, the ZPD centres on the role of guidance from adults, older siblings, or more competent peers in assisting the process of development of a child. Vygotsky defined the term 'collaboration' as any situation in which a child is given some interaction with another person whereby the individuals are finding a solution to a problem (Chaiklin, 2003). This suggests that the process of internalisation arises out of guided and collaborative learning. In this research, learning should take place at two stages: first, when the teacher/researcher engaged the students in the scaffolding tasks; second, when the students collaboratively interacted with each other in the debate. The findings indicated that at least thirteen participants preferred to work with their familiar peers with little expression of concern about any differences in the levels of skills necessary for debate.

However, there was also some evidence indicating that there is a negative aspect associated with performing debate in a comfortable atmosphere. Thirteen participants appreciated working with their friends or familiar peers because it created a more relaxed atmosphere. However, for Priya, Natalie, Alice and Rosie, this kind of atmosphere was not considered to be challenging enough to facilitate their performance. In other words, for them, they did not appear to find this a space of development – the ZPD was too close. Instead, arguing with unacquainted interlocutors or unfamiliar peers would have been an opportunity to step out of their comfort zones and be open to learning from others. The following interview excerpts expressed the view from these participants that there would have been some benefit to being assigned to work with unfamiliar peers:

> *The atmosphere of debate was quite relaxed for us. Therefore, I thought that my friend and I didn't take our performance in debate seriously enough. [Priya]*

> *If I were paired with someone else rather than Kelly, my performance would have been a bit different. I would take the task more seriously. I think there were pros and cons of self-pairing. It created relaxed atmosphere. However, arguing with an unfamiliar interlocutor seemed challenging and interesting too. [Natalie]*

> *My close friend and I have worked with each other in many group projects. We sort of understand each other's personalities and feelings. The way we argue each other in the task would be quite predictable because we know each other so well. However, working with an unacquainted partner sounds exciting. It would be like fully testing my capacity to handle something beyond my prediction, like impromptu thinking and speaking. [Alice]*

> *My close friends and I know each other well. We understand each other's perspectives. However, working with an unfamiliar partner would allow me to see the strength of that person. [Rosie]*

As indicated earlier, peer familiarity created a secure learning environment for some participants. For instance, Nala and Tulip were of the view that this secure environment created a platform which would allow them to perform in accordance with their actual abilities. They were less likely to be worried about any consequences of underperforming or outperforming in debate. Nala's and Tulip's interview excerpts confirmed their positive feelings around debating with their close friends.

> *I found that debate was enjoyable, especially when I worked with my close friend. I enjoyed my participation in debate because this was a floor to use my skills that I have possessed and show my capacity. [Nala]*

> *Debate involved challenging and attacking each other's arguments. It was like a competition and I felt like I wanted to win. If my close friend and I collaborated with each other, no matter how hard we challenged each other, we would perceive this as a role-play. At the end, we would still understand each other. Compared to the random allocation, if I performed poorer than my partner, my feeling would be like I lost. [Tulip]*

Patrick's interview data provided other supporting evidence that working with an unacquainted partner could have a negative impact. Patrick was randomly paired with an unfamiliar peer, Roger, whom he treated as a senior partner. The internalised concepts of hierarchy reinforced the imbalance in power between himself and his interlocutor. This established an unfavourable condition for Patrick and arguing with Roger under this situation negatively influenced his performance in debate. He revealed that he did not fully engage competitively in debate and his unsatisfactory performance was associated with a reluctance to challenge and refute Roger's opinions in debate. It can be surmised that Patrick wished to avoid making his interlocutor lose face. Also, he may have placed an importance on maintaining a peer relationship even though the peer was not the same age. As he described it:

> *If I was paired with my friend who was my age, I wouldn't have held back. I would have enjoyed debate more, I didn't want to challenge Roger that much because he wasn't my close friend. If I have worked with a friend whom I felt familiar with and that person knew me well too, the way we would have argued and challenged each other would have been more competitive, but enjoyable. [Patrick]*

It is clear that intimacy between peers can established a favourable condition which, in consequence, supports the individuals within this cohort's performance in debate. That is, working with a familiar peer is more likely to encourage them to perform in accordance with their actual capacities and be less worried over losing their face due to an unsatisfactory or poor performance in debate. In contrast, an unfamiliar relationship or an imbalanced power-relationship between peers may result in an adverse condition which makes one of the individual's feel insecure when performing the tasks. This would negatively affect their performance in debate. Working with an unacquainted partner also had the potential to make the interlocutor concerned about embarrassing or shaming the other interlocutor. The arguments would be pursued in a less

aggressive manner and although this would be beneficial in preventing or minimizing a conflict, it does not provide for an effective debate.

Lastly, if the participants knew each other, this appeared to reduce any uncomfortable feelings and potential conflict during and after debate. One of the prominent characteristics of the debate model that I was proposing is the challenge of the interlocutors from the opposing team in a competing and conflicting manner. There is an expectation of flashpoints when the speakers clash directly and oppose each other's arguments. This creates a competitive environment and may have negative consequences for individuals if the situation is not appropriately managed. As previously presented, fifteen participants appeared to prefer working with familiar peers in a supportive and friendly environment. Even though they challenged each other with strong arguments, they felt their actions would not be misinterpreted, and any potential conflict would not be triggered.

Challenging and attacking each other's arguments involves emotions which may cause uncomfortable feelings between the speakers. Five participants[41] indicated that close friends tended to understand each other's personalities. No matter what degree of challenge that occurred during argumentation, at the end they still understood each other and did not take it personally. The following interview excerpts confirmed some participants' unwillingness to confront their partners. For example, Sebastian's, Sergio's and Nathan's opinions reflected their concerns about the negative effect of performing debate with an unfamiliar peer:

> *If my interlocutor and I didn't know each other well, I'm afraid that my responses during debate would make that person feel inferior. This would negatively affect our friendship. Possibly, all the negative feelings evoked during debate would leave him or her with an unfavourable impression on me. Working with my close friend will allow me to be myself more. [Sebastian]*
>
> *Being paired with a friend with whom I felt unfamiliar worried me. This is because, I wouldn't be able to fully guess the way that person would respond to my arguments and the degree of his or her emotions and attitudes during debate. It was beyond my control and understanding. I felt uneasy. [Sergio]*

[41] These included Paula, Shane, Sebastian, Nathan and Sergio.

> *If I were paired with an unfamiliar friend, I would be worried over his or her skills, personalities and attitudes. If that person behaved awkwardly and unprofessionally during the argumentation task, that would be because he or she didn't feel familiar to me either. [Nathan]*

Within this supporting environment, this group considered that they would not be judged by their poor performance. They could be themselves and perform in the way they wished. It appeared to diminish any uncomfortable feelings caused by confrontational actions in argumentation and debate. Any potential conflict would not be triggered, even if they challenged each other with strong arguments.

In summary, peer relationships can promote collaboration and social interaction and this supportive conditions enable students to move from other-regulation to self-regulation within the ZPD. Although competitiveness is one of the prominent characteristics of debate, working with familiar peers promoted a collaborative and supportive learning environment for many participants in debate. Their appreciation for entering the task with specific persons created a secure condition in debate. In contrast, being paired up with unfamiliar partners established a stressful condition in which some participants felt uncomfortable when confronting the opposite speakers' arguments. In particular, those participants who were concerned with the interaction with unfamiliar interlocutors would perform in debate in a relatively passive manner. For example, they would avoiding asking for meaning clarification.

6.2.3 **Topic interest**

When asking the participants about the likelihood of taking part in any debate in the future, eleven participants[42] indicated that the debate topic was one of the primary elements in their decision to whether they would participate. The participants' enthusiasm for the topic of social media applications appeared to reflect an engagement of their world knowledge. The following excerpts from interviews with Shane and Patrick, confirmed the extent to which a discussion topic generated their enthusiasm and engagement in debate. We can also see that, for Shane, his belief that a

[42] These included Karina, Nadine, Pam, Nala, Priya, Ted, Roger, Patrick, Shane, Sebastian and Patricia.

passion for a topic played a part in how well he would be able to mediate his performance.

> *In the future, I will join debate if a topic for discussion is interesting enough. I think I would have loads of ideas for supporting my arguments. [Shane]*
>
> *My decision to or not to participate in debate in the future depends on whether or not there were a topic that interests me. [Patrick]*

Karina's opinion, which indicated her lack of interest in debating in the given topic also supported the above insight. Perhaps, Karina may have been exposed to a great deal of information associated with this topic. It may be that her constructed internalised meanings directed her lack of interest in this topic and this affected her learning of argumentation skills.

> *The topic of social media applications is too plain for me. In essay writing and other writing courses, a lot of students chose this topic for their homework assignments. However, it isn't of my interest. [Karina]*

These three participants seemed more motivated to debate a topic that was of interest to them. The findings were consistent with the standard assumption that the passion of learners for a topic enhances engagement in a task (e.g. Littlewood, 1981; Ellis, 2003; Willis and Willis, 2007). Several scholars (e.g. Dörnyei, 2002; Ellis, 2003) emphasise how a topic influences attention and engagement in a task for English language learners. According to Ellis (2003), some empirical studies (e.g. Zuengler and Bent, 1991, Newton, 1991 and Lange, 2000) concluded that English language learners tended to perform as active speakers or be dominant in interactions when the topic of discussion was important to them. In addition, Shane's interview excerpt also suggested that topic interest plays a part in facilitating the process of recalling his background knowledge with regard to the debate topic. The findings can be supported with the results of the research study by Schiefele and Krapp (1996). The authors reported that topic interest was significantly related to the recall of idea units, elaboration and main ideas. The study also suggested that topic interest was associated with the depth of learning. However, their research was conducted within a different context which involved reading and recall of expository text rather than speaking. Nevertheless, it is obvious that a connection exists between topic interest, affective motivation and task

engagement. Apart from topic interest, the literature also highlights the relationship between topic 'familiarity' and task performance. Section 6.3 presents the analysis of the findings which provided some insights about the participants' familiarity with the topic and their performance in debate.

In summary, these interviews highlighted that emotions are paramount for the process of fostering argumentation skills in a Thai classroom. Students' emotions can positively or negatively result in their engagement with a task. Poteau (2017) has studied the impact of emotions, and specifically anxiety, in L2 learners.

> Any stressful or anxiety-inducing environment can affect Foreign Language Learners (FLL) on multiple levels including (but not limited to) the cognitive/neural and motivational dimensions. As outlined in SCT, language learning stems from learners' active participation in a stimulating social environment that promotes meaningful, interactive exchanges, and negotiations. This theory suggests that a supportive environment that offers learners feedback from familiar peers facilitates FLL by increasing learners' motivation to actively engage in group work tasks. Learners…can experience lower anxiety levels when working with a familiar peer as opposed to an unfamiliar peer…Clearly, affective factors can influence one another in FLL contexts. In other words, anxiety affects motivation, and motivation affects the allocation of attention. Lack of attention to specific target language features can affect cognitive development. [p. 15]

It is striking how the themes that emerged in this study – anxiety, peer relationships, and topic interest – are described in the passage by Poteau. The author informs us of the impact of anxiety on language learning and how such learners prefer familiar peers. Likewise, language learning is promoted through 'active participation' and 'meaningful, interactive exchanges'; such interplay would not be feasible without a topic of interest to engage the interlocutors during debate.

It can be speculated that the debate task fundamentally involves not only thinking and reasoning skills but also the highly charged emotional states of the participants. All of themes to emerge substantiate that that the act of participating in debate was resonant with issues relating to emotions. Within the context of this research, it is crucial not to underestimate the emotions of the students as emotions can hinder or enhance

internalisation[43]. For the students, their emotions suggested the affective aspect of their participation in debate. It is clear that the familiarity between peers was one of the factors influencing a significant number of participants' emotions. In the same way, the characteristics and topics of debate and the participants' low level of self-confidence in English language proficiency provoked significant anxiety in performing debate. Although Vygotsky observed the importance of emotion, and how it was inseparable from the intellectual, it would be reasonable to assess that his theory does not properly adapt to individuals with high emotional states. To facilitate the learning of argumentation to occur during the task, it is important to assist those students to overcome the anxiety which hinders their learning.

6.3 **Knowledge and understanding issues**

A number of issues that related to the background knowledge of the participants were identified in the interview data as factors that shaped the students' abilities to develop argumentation skills under this pedagogic design.

6.3.1 **Role of background knowledge and task performance**

I gave careful consideration in choosing the topic for the tasks. It was determined that the topic of issues associated with social media applications, which are relevant and ubiquitous in the lives of students would be able to generate their engagement in the tasks and the expected outcomes. Evidence from the participants' interviews confirmed the role that background knowledge, personal experience and the convictions of the participants played in the tasks. First, prior knowledge and experience helped to facilitate the comprehension of the information that was provided. Secondly, background knowledge facilitated the preparation of the content for the tasks. A third aspect indicated that an inadequate prior knowledge was likely to hinder searching for new possible aspects during the tasks. A final observed theme related to a relationship

[43] In the area of language learning, Swain (2013) claims that emotions have a considerable impact on learning. Swain also argues how the converse situation, that emotion is influenced by learning, is rarely considered.

between prior knowledge and the adherence to a particular argument that echoed and reinforced some participants' views.

6.3.1.1 Background knowledge facilitates comprehension

Students who reported some background knowledge and experience of the topic reported that they found it easier to understand the information in the video clips and to identify the patterns of the claims and the arguments. Without taking the linguistic, pragmatic and discourse knowledge into account, the feedback from Paula, Ted, Patricia, Nicole indicated that, in terms of content, the second excerpt 'How Social Media Makes Us Unsocial' appeared to be less difficult to comprehend compared to the first excerpt 'Online Social Change: Easy to Organise, Hard to Win'. The opinions from three participants, Ted, Nicole and Paula indicated that this group was more likely to draw upon their prior knowledge and experience to comprehend the text which explored how social media created isolation in society. In contrast, the first excerpt, which described media censorship and the use of social media for political movements, appeared to be more difficult to comprehend. This suggests that if the text content was of little relevance to their personal experience then the participants were less likely to comprehend it.

> *For me, the second video clip was not relevant to my life and experience. I comprehended the second video clip better because I'm in the environment where social media applications are part of our daily lives. I rarely watch news programme on TV, so I had no idea about censorship on TV. Rather, I usually follow news from Twitter and websites which enabled me to access to real-time incidents and issues. [Ted]*

> *The first except was more difficult because it concerned the protests and most vocabulary involved the news reports. I seldom follow that kind of news. There were unknown words and some points I didn't understand. In contrast, I found the second excerpt easier to comprehend because it was more relevant to everyday life. Vocabulary presented in the excerpt were also found in spoken language, daily life and lessons. [Nicole]*

> *The content of the first excerpt, which concerned the protest, was more difficult than the second one. It might be because it was not directly related to my life. I found it relatively difficult to understand some points. [Paula]*

These findings are consistent with the literature about schema theory which contends that background knowledge and experience are brought to the fore in the process of comprehension (e.g. Ellis, 2003; McVee, Dunsmore and Gavelek, 2005; Brown and Lee,

2015)[44]. I drew upon the sociocultural perspectives on prior knowledge to explain the phenomena. The evidence clearly indicated that the background knowledge of Paula, Ted, Patricia and Nicole facilitated the process of internalisation of their immediate actions. According to McVee and colleagues (2005), sociocultural theory treats social and cultural considerations as the most essential factors for the acquisition of background knowledge which engenders an ability to interpret the world. Background knowledge is regarded as a cultural process of individual-social origin and as mediated by cultural tools. It can be conjectured that the cohort's internalised meanings of social media applications are mediated through the cultural tools and within their communities that they were exposed to. The existing knowledge about social media applications which had been stored in mental structures was later activated during the receptive process to facilitate the comprehension of the video clips.

6.3.1.2 Background knowledge facilitates content preparation

The second theme to emerge from the interview data relates to how prior knowledge facilitated the process of accessing and operationalising information for content preparation. The feedback from twenty-four participants confirmed the role prior knowledge played in preparing content for the tasks. It was found that the participants' confidence and performance in constructing arguments were largely influenced by to what extent the topic allowed them to make an association through drawing upon their background knowledge and experience. For example, in Task 3 in which the participants made refutation, nineteen participants[45] prioritised the items which they were required to use for repudiation. Their decision was made in accordance with how much those items allowed them to bring their background

[44] For the first observation, which related to how prior knowledge and experience helped to facilitate comprehension, I drew upon the concepts of mediation and internalisation. Bruner (Bruner, 1962) describes in the introduction to Vygotsky's 'Thought and Language' how the internalisation of external dialogues brings the tool of language to accommodate the stream of thoughts. Of course, Vygotsky's semiotic mediation emphasises the use of psychological tools for mastering mental processes. For Vygotsky, language, in particular, is the major element in the process of internalisation and the development of higher mental functions.

[45] These participants included Karina, Nala, Paula, Adele, Shane, Beatrix, Sebastian, Nicole, Sydney, Nathan, Kate, Alice, Nancy, Kelly, Natalie, Tereza, Sergio, Tim and Page.

knowledge and experience to argument construction. For example, Natalie and Page reflected on their performance in Task 3.

> *Amongst the three argument items, I felt confident in my refutation against the items which concerned the impact of social media applications on isolation and on expression of emotions. In my opinion, both items seemed more relevant to my daily life. It was part of my daily life. [Natalie]*

> *I think I performed okay. I was quite confident in making refutation against the item which concerned the negative effects of social media applications on expression of emotion because I associated it with my everyday life. [Page]*

In a similar line, the findings from the interviews clearly support how background knowledge was crucial for the students in performing debate. Prior knowledge and experience appeared to be a meaningful tool the participants initially employed in the process of generating ideas and producing content for debate, especially when the time provided was curtailed and in the situations which required impromptu performance. Eleven participants[46] asserted that a familiar topic allowed them to draw on their background knowledge and experience, and this facilitated a preparation of content for debate. The reasons why they were relatively familiar with the topic of social media applications were captured from their interview data, including their direct experiences as users of social media applications and their exposure to this topic through written assignments and oral presentations not only in EFL classrooms but also in other subjects. With an adequate exposure to the topic, this group of participants emphasised that it helped to reduce the effort and time for content preparation. As Nala and Ted stated:

> *If I had no idea about social media applications and mass communication, I would definitely have required longer time to prepare for the content, longer than the time provided. This is because, I needed to firstly acquire fundamental knowledge about social media applications before being able to make an argument. However, with my background knowledge I skipped that initial step and was able to manage preparing for all necessary information within the preparation time given [Nala].*

> *I had background knowledge about social media applications, both pros and cons… I had ideas and I knew what to deliver in my sessions [Ted].*

[46] These included Karina, Sabrina, Sally, Nala, Paula, Sage, Ted, Paul, Beatrix, Sebastian and Alice.

I applied Vygotsky's principle ideas about verbal thought (inner speech) to explain my understanding about the process in which the participants recalled background knowledge to prepared content for Task 3. Luria made a significant contribution to the principle ideas of inner speech which was introduced by Vygotsky and proposed a three-step model in forming an utterance: the motive; the thought and its transformation to inner speech; and external speech (Akhutina, 2003). Luria explained that in verbal communication there are some thoughts that a speaker wants to address to his/her interlocutor. Initially, the instructions of Task 3 directed the participants to the construction of their own arguments to refute against the given arguments. As he was directed by the task objective, for example, Ted was able to use his background knowledge and selectively recall prospective knowledge which had already been internalised. This enabled him to produce rudimentary thoughts which were the starting points of his utterances. This inner speech, which was rooted in the intention of a verbal utterance, was later recoded into external speech. As Ted said:

> *I had ideas and I know what to deliver in my sessions. Amongst several points, I prioritised the effects of social media applications on health issue because it is sort of factual information and it sounds legitimate and difficult to be refuted. With this kay idea in mind that social media applications can cause 'eating disorder', during the preparation time, I searched for more information about the negative impact of social media on physical disorder [Ted].*

When the topic went beyond the prior knowledge and experience of the participants, it was more likely to result in an unsatisfactory performance. This observation was prominent in the interview data of three participants. Karina, Adele and Paul struggled to make refutation against the arguments in which the content was beyond their experience. Their statements also implied that their unsatisfactory performance was dependent on how much they could draw upon their prior knowledge and experience in the task:

> *Items 2 and 3 weren't difficult because they were relevant to my daily life. However, my background knowledge seemed inadequate for making refutation against the first item which was about social media and politics. [Karina]*

> *Item 1 which was about social movement and politics went beyond my interest, my daily life and experience. I found it difficult to make refutation against the given argument. [Adele]*

It would definitely have affected my performance if I have had no background knowledge about the topic of the argumentation task. If the topic hadn't related to my life, I would have relied on sources of information instead of bringing my prior knowledge and experience in the task. [Paul]

The above evidence indicated that when a topic went beyond the participants' knowledge and experience, they were unable to activate any material from their existing knowledge. From a sociocultural perspective, prior knowledge functions as mediational tools that have been continually modified within social practices. These tools represent conceptual aspects of human cognition (McVee, Dunsmore and Gavelek, 2005). Although making refutation was not unfamiliar to Karina, Adele and Paul, an inadequate background knowledge resulted in the lack of mediational tools for facilitating the production of any rudimentary thoughts. Without the starting point of utterance, the recoding of inner speech to external speech would not take place as it should.

6.3.1.3 Background knowledge hinders exploration of other aspects

The third theme, the importance of the debate topic, had an impact on the activation of prior knowledge. It appeared that some participants initially drew upon their background knowledge and experience to help generate ideas which could be further formed and developed as arguments. That is, some participants' prior knowledge and experience of the content made the task easier, however other participants were unable to draw upon their knowledge and experience and found the task difficult. Lacking prior knowledge could also limit the potential for some participants to think of and explore other possible aspects. Paula and Sydney explained why they gave up or avoided making refutation against the items that they found to be beyond their knowledge and experience.

I was more confident in doing items 2 and 3. I skipped making refutation against item 1 which was about social media and social movement because I, completely, had no idea about it. [Paula]

I skipped making refutation against item 1 because I am not knowledgeable about politics and protests. I completed only item 2 because it seemed more relevant to daily life. For item 3, I brought my knowledge obtained from the linguistic course to refutation. [Sydney]

From the findings, there appeared to be an association between background knowledge, inner speech and intention. This is in line with the discussion of the second theme, which centred on the effect of an inadequate background knowledge and inner speech on the shortage of a verbal utterance production. Observations from the study and interviews suggested that an inadequate or a lack of background knowledge of a discussion topic resulted in the loss of intention or motivation which directly influenced the transformation of inner speech into external speech.

6.3.1.4 Background knowledge and adherence to certain argument

The last theme to be reviewed is concerned with the interplay between prior knowledge and a reliance on a certain argument. Background knowledge, to a certain degree, influenced the way the participants agreed or disagreed with the arguments. When students completely agreed with a claim or argument, they found it difficult to make other enquiries or look for other points of view. Thus, there was evidence demonstrating that the reliance of some participants on a certain argument appeared to limit their openness to searching for other possibilities and other viewpoints. In Task 3, in which the participants were required to make refutation against the argument items provided, twenty-one participants[47] realised that they were unable to make refutation against the arguments with which they completely agreed. For example:

> *My feeling was like, I totally agreed with the argument items from the first time I read them. Therefore, it was difficult to find any stronger argument for refutation…. I shared my stance and personal experience with the speaker who made this argument. How could I refute against what we totally agreed? It was like I was trying to find any trivial points which were not even valid enough for refutation. [Sage]*
>
> *The arguments the speakers made were completely strong and difficult to refute. I couldn't find any points to refute because I agreed with them immediately after I have read the argument items. [Tereza]*
>
> *In my opinion, what the speakers addressed was absolutely right…. I thought in the same way. I knew that I was required to refute their arguments, but how? I totally agreed with their points. [Sabrina]*

[47] These include Wanda, Sabrina, Nadine, Tam, Adele, Shannon, Sage, Ted, Roger, Patrick, Patricia, Rosie, Tulip, Alice, Nancy, Charlotte, Wendy, Tereza, Sergio, Tim and Page.

Overall, the findings demonstrated that the background knowledge and experience of participants functioned as a sort of 'fast-track' method to foster thinking and was likely to have a highly significant impact on the content creation and the task performance of the participants. Initially, topic familiarity facilitated accessing and operationalising information. More importantly, the findings emphasised the greater influence of background knowledge on not only the comprehension of the listening texts in Task 2 but also the process of thinking in making refutation. Background knowledge and experience was also utilised during debate in the process of content creation within the limited preparation time and when the participants dealt with impromptu situations during the refutation and rebuttal sessions. The evidence also suggested that an association between prior knowledge and strongly held convictions prevented some participants from being open to searching for other possible views.

6.3.2 **Levels of English language proficiency and performance**

According to the findings, it was clear that debate provided the platform in which the participants utilised a repertoire of symbolic tools, including the English spoken language and body language, necessary for accomplishing the task. This helped to generate an understanding of what the participants were able to do in the task in the present and what guidance needed to be offered in order to improve their abilities in the future.

The questionnaire data showed that twenty-three out of thirty-eight participants, or about 61%, appeared to be confident about their English communication skills whereas fifteen, or 39%, of the participants appeared to lack confidence in their skills. Despite their confidence, what was striking about the interview data was that seventeen participants[48] clearly expressed their unsatisfactory feelings with their English language abilities in performing debate. They were of the view that their levels of English proficiency were limited for efficiently handling their tasks in debate. For

[48] These included Karina, Sabrina, Nadine, Nala, Paula, Adele, Shannon, Sage, Roger, Patrick, Shane, Paul, Beatrix, Patricia, Sydney, Charlotte and Natalie.

example, Sage, Sydney and Patrick voiced their concerns over the use of L2 in debate rather than L1:

> *The most crucial obstacle in the debate was the use of English because it is not my mother tongue…. One of the limitations found in my performance in the task was my English language ability. If I had used Thai, which is my first language, in the task, one-hour speaking wouldn't have been hard work for me. Another factor is my limited knowledge of vocabulary that played a role in my ability to express my thoughts. [Sage]*
>
> *I spent so much time structuring what I wanted to articulate. I think the problem was my English-speaking skill… My performance was less likely to run smooth. My speech mechanism functioned slower than my mind which kept creating loads of ideas. [Sydney]*
>
> *I don't think I was satisfied with my English language ability and performance in debate. However, I was okay with my thinking ability. The problem was about vocabulary and word choice. I struggled thinking of specific words for emphasising my ideas. I knew those words, but I couldn't recall them during performing the task. Therefore, I ended up using general terms and simple sentence structures which were less likely to deliver what I actually meant. [Patrick]*

The above interview data indicated that vocabulary knowledge, accuracy and fluency were matters of concern for some students. In line with the interview data, the evidence from the questionnaire data showed that 63.2% of the participants strongly agreed that vocabulary knowledge was necessary for their task performance. Further, 44.7% and 39.5% were of the opinion that debate required a high level of grammatical accuracy and conversational English fluency, respectively. However, the findings also showed the degree to which the language competence and English fluency required in debate was inconsistent with those in the students' perceptions. 68.4% and 57.9% viewed their abilities to produce grammatically accurate and fluent English as average, respectively, when performing the debate. Nevertheless, from the findings, it was clear that many participants had concerns over their English language abilities.

Dealing with debate tends to require a reasonable proficiency in English speaking. It had been previously indicated that this research was about ideas, rather than the evaluation of English language proficiency in speaking. However, it is difficult to ignore the fact that debate still requires the speakers' articulation of their thoughts in English in a comprehensible way. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines (2012) describes how speakers at the Advanced High level should be able to discuss some topics in an abstract manner,

particularly those topics relevant to their interests. Further, speakers should also provide a structured argument to support their viewpoints. Similarly, Trapp and colleagues (2005) note that during engagement in debate in a L2, the interlocutors need to concentrate on the multiple elements of language such as vocabulary, semantic, syntax, grammatical rules and idioms. Mastering these elements may cause difficulties as meanings need to be formulated in the target language and conformed to the linguistic norms (Prabhu, 1987). If the participants are not well-versed in English, particularly speaking and listening, they may find debate a difficult activity.

From Vygotsky's viewpoints, the participants used English as a tool to mediate their actions in debate for comprehension and correspondence with argumentation strategies. To mediate their performance in debate comprises their cognitive capabilities, of which their intentions, thoughts and inner speech were transformed into verbal utterances. Some participants' unsatisfactory feelings with their English language abilities in debate informed the degree to which the mediational means they operated is problematic for them. The phenomena in relations to this can be further explained through the lenses of Wertsch's (1998) notion of properties in mediated actions and the associated mediational tools. Within this approach, the focus is on agents - the mediator of actions - and the mediational tools they employ in specific contexts. Hence, the analysis evolved with the primary focus on the extent to which the symbolic mediator was able to support the participants for their accomplishment in the given context.

My analysis focuses on to what extent the levels of English proficiency empowered or constrained some participants' mediated actions. The analysis of the findings raised an awareness that the use of English language, which was not the first language of the agents, could result in some constraints in the task. Overall, the participants' negative feedback about their use of English language in debate related to meaning, accuracy and fluency. This also raised a question with regard to transferability from L1 to L2. It can be understood that some participants who were required to operate spoken English language as a symbolic mediator in debate would encounter friction during the process of adapting words to their own semantic, accent, and expressive intentions.

Due to the constraints associated with the appropriation of the symbolic mediator (e.g. vocabulary, grammar, syntactic structure) the spoken English language they employed had a consequence on their performance in debate. Wertsch (1998) notes that mediated action is characterised by an irreducible tension between the agent and the mediational means. He asserts that when agents do not operate the language system by choice, but rather it is provided within a sociocultural context, they are detached consumers of this mediational tool. Wertsch (1998) explains that one's production of utterances in L1 involves a process of appropriating the words of others and making them one's own in order to serves their intentions. Therefore, the use of symbolic mediators can be challenging when the agents operate their speech in L1 under certain contrived or unnatural situations. As indicated, it can be readily understood that the participants experienced difficulties in using L2 to mediate their actions in debate. This raises the question as to whether the students are required to develop and possess a certain English proficiency level which enables them to efficiently deal with the debate task.

6.4 Critical thinking and argumentation issues

This section deals with the analysis of the participants' reflections in order to explore their attitudes and the meanings of their hand-on experiences in the argumentation task. The themes which recurred throughout the data set were presented in the following sections in two major dimensions, the participants' cognitive abilities and the complexity of the debate and the meanings associated with introspection.

Vygotsky's perspectives inform us that the developmental process of one's higher mental functions involves mediation in an interaction with an environment (Vygotsky, 1978). Mediation has been distinguished into two aspects, an intervention through human agents or through forms of organised learning activities (Kozulin, 2003). In the present study, mediation appeared to occur through both aspects, as I shall discuss below.

6.4.1 Cognitive abilities and complexity of debate

In this research study, a modified conventional debate served as the key tool to mediate argumentation skills. This section reports the tension between debate

(mediational tool) and agents (participants) in mediated actions. The analysis of the interview data demonstrated that the employment of debate was challenging for some participants. As Wertsch (1998) illustrated, while cultural tools can enable a person's thinking and actions, they can also constrain. In order to achieve the best possible outcomes in the task, the debate required significant effort in mastering certain skills such as reasoning, evaluating reasons and evidence, refutation and rebuttal. An examination of the data suggested that the combined activities associated with cognitive load, cognitive operation (reasoning) and improvisation simultaneously under time pressure was difficult for some participants. The above-mentioned three factors give an indication of the level of the task complexity[49]. Amongst the group of twenty participants who indicated that debate was very challenging, eight interview scripts reported that debate was a difficult environment for cognitive processing[50] and cognitive operation. In order to participate meaningfully in debate, the participants had to process and organise informational content from the input materials and put their efforts into constructing sound arguments. Consistent with the interview data, the questionnaire data reported that 41.3% of the participants considered that they needed to process significant information during their performance in debate. The interview excerpts from Page, Wendy and Nancy below highlighted how difficult debate was for them in terms of the cognitive and multifarious skills demanded from them in making refutation.

> *I think the session in which the opposite speaker made refutation was tough. Apart from paying attention to the refutation, I had to identify the arguments and think about how I should respond to those points at the same time. [Page]*

> *The session in which I had to really pay attention to the refutation of the opposite speaker was the most difficult. In that session I had to really focus on what the opposite speaker said, process information and think about what I would like to rebut in the next session at the same time. [Wendy]*

[49] Task complexity is defined in Skehan's (1996, 1998) framework as the degree to which the task is easy or difficult. Robinson (2001) indicates that the attentional, memory, reasoning and information processing demands imposed by the characteristics of the task on language learners contribute to the complexity of the task.

[50] Cognitive processing refers to the cognitive demands of processing information from the input material (Ellis, 2003).

I think I could handle presenting my arguments in my first session. However, I struggled in the session in which the opposite speaker making refutation. I had to pay attention to the refutation the speaker made and construct arguments for my rebuttal session at the same time. [Nancy]

Another theme to emerge in the interview data related to the time pressure demanded by the task. The transcripts of six participants indicated that the time pressure conditions caused feelings of anxiety during their performance. Within a limited time, the participants had to deal with processing the informational content of the input and providing immediate responses to the points the interlocutors made. The following are comments on time constraint in debate from Patricia, Tereza and Sydney.

There was no time between the sessions to summarise the points the other speaker made, think of points for making rebuttal and refutation and organise ideas to be delivered. The whole process went quickly. [Patricia]

The rebuttal session is the hardest one. It was beyond what I had prepared. There was very little time to prepare for rebutting the points the opposite speaker refuted. I needed more information. Due to the time constraint, I didn't have time to even think about what I was going to say in my rebuttal session. To be honest, I was quite blank. [Tereza]

While carefully listening to the opposite speaker, I had to identify the arguments of the speakers. The time between each session was very limited. The sessions started immediately after the previous sessions. There was no time for reviewing all the points I noted down. [Sydney]

Apart from the time pressure, the interview data showed that seven participants appeared to be stressed due to the simultaneous nature of the interactions which was difficult for this cohort to accommodate. In particular, the rebuttal session was challenging for this participant group. The interactions were unrehearsed and beyond their control and thus they had to improvise their rebuttal speeches.

Among the three sessions, I think the refutation session is the most difficult one. This is because, I was required to refute the points made by the opposite speaker which was new information. Moreover, I was expected to immediately respond to all those points… One of the most important skills required in the task is speaking, particularly in an impromptu situation. [Nicole]

I couldn't handle thinking in impromptu situation... For me, the rebuttal session is the most difficult one. I couldn't rely on the script anymore because I had already delivered what was written in the script in my previous talks. Apart from listening to the speakers' refutation, I had to quickly form ideas to respond to the refutation at the same time. Everything was improvised at that time. [Wendy]

Amongst the three sessions of my talk, I think my first session is the best and my rebuttal session is the worst. This is because, there was inadequate time to prepare beforehand for dealing with any possible points the speaker might attack. Moreover, my background knowledge doesn't seem to be enough for handling rebuttal. [Charlotte]

Debate demands cognitive processing, which involves manipulating and structuring the informational content of the input, as well as a cognitive operation for reasoning. The evidence from the interview data showed that there was a tension between conventional debate and the mediated actions of some participants. It is worth emphasising that the difficulties of this group with rebuttal and refutation rhymes with other studies (e.g. Jiménez-Aleixandre, Rodriguez and Duschl, 2000; Erduran, Simon and Osborne, 2004). These so-called secondary Toulmin argument structures are associated with a higher quality of argument structure and indeed higher mental functions. That this cohort struggled when dealing with rebuttals and refutation, the secondary Toulmin elements, suggests that the scaffolding exercises to develop these skills were insufficient for some participants.

Consequently, these factors, the simultaneous nature of refutations and the associated time constraints, created feelings of anxiety for some of the participants during their performance in the task. Viewed through the ZPD lens, these data indicate that there was a substantive distance between some participants' existing levels of cognitive processing and cognitive operation and the skills that the argumentation tasks required. More scaffolding activities appeared to be necessary for a transition to the next level of development. That is, more scaffolding activities were still necessary for improving the development of cognitive skills, especially cognitive processing and cognitive operation, to the level at which the participants were familiar with the nature of the argumentation process and confident to perform the task autonomously.

6.4.2 **Introspection**

One of the significant understandings to emerge from the findings related to the importance of developing a capacity to reflect on experiences from the explicit teaching and learning of argumentation skills. In Vygotsky's approach to learning and development, higher mental functions are developed in collaborative dialogues through the process of internalisation. This method has been applied to incorporate the

reflection activity after debate in order to encourage the participants to review and evaluate their actions in the tasks they had engaged in this research study.

The emergence of the themes found in the participants' introspection was reported in two sub themes, including self-evaluation and consciousness raising. First, the process of introspection encouraged some to reveal what they found out about themselves and their interactions with the task. The introspection of twenty-eight participants[51] reported their perceived limitations in association with their performance. Their unsatisfactory feelings were related to their low levels of self-confidence in English language abilities, cognitive processing and operation, as discussed in Sections 6.3.2 and 6.4.1. However, becoming aware of their limitations did not appear to demotivate these twenty-eight participants in their learning. Despite these feelings of limitations, they appeared to be positive and insisted on building their skills and capacities. For example, Natalie, Alice and Sage reflected on their strengths and weaknesses in their performance in debate.

> *I wasn't happy with my performance in debate. The way I constructed my arguments needed much improvement because they weren't clear and sound enough…. Although I felt a bit disappointed with my performance, I wished I would be able to perform better next time. I learned that I should improve my skills. I shouldn't stop developing myself. [Natalie]*
>
> *My performance in debate reflected what I could do and what were my weaknesses. For example, my performance was alright because I had lots of things to say, but I ran out of ideas and words at the end of my sessions. This was one of my weaknesses. However, what I had done in debate proved that I could do it. The outcomes also showed what skills I should improve. [Alice]*
>
> *I saw the mistakes I made and some weaknesses in my speaking skills. It was clear to me that my speaking skills needed improvement. In debate, there were moments that I struggled with delivering my thoughts. It made me aware of what skills I should improve. [Sage]*

Secondly, it was found that consciousness raising took place during the reflection activity. The conditions established to encourage the reflection activity appeared to be able to encourage the participants to become aware of what they learned and

[51] These included Karina, Nadine, Tam, Sally, Pam, Priya, Paula, Adele, Shannon, Sage, Ted, Roger, Patrick, Shane, Paul, Beatrix, Sebastian, Nathan, Kate, Tulip, Alice, Nancy, Charlotte, Kelly, Natalie, Tereza, Tim and Page.

experienced from the scaffolding tasks and the way they applied the knowledge to construct arguments. Twenty-one participants[52] reported that the knowledge with regard to the structure of a claim and an argument which they explicitly learned from the scaffolding tasks was transferred during debate. For example, Wanda's and Rosie's statements reflected their awareness in learning the argument structure.

> *If I wasn't introduced to the structure of a claim and an argument in this research project, the way I delivered the claims would be based on my style. From my instinct, I know that I need to support the claims with reasoning. I didn't categorise them as major claim, argument and evidence. Without learning that there was the pattern or structure out there, I would deliver the claims according to my instinct. [Wanda]*

> *I have learned the structure of a claim and an argument from the tasks I have done. In fact, this structure doesn't look unfamiliar to me. I learned it from a classroom before, but I completely forgot. When making an argument, I am aware that this clear structure should be applied to allow the listeners to easily follow the message I want to deliver. I need to support a major claim with an argument and evidence. [Rosie]*

Sally and Paula expressed their satisfied feelings about being provided with the scaffolding tasks:

> *The tasks demonstrated steps necessary for making claims and arguments. I really enjoyed performing the tasks… I like the way I learned things step-by-step, from easy to advance… Supposed that, I were asked to perform debate without any training. That would be impossible, or my performance would be very poor. [Sally]*

> *I learned the steps for making arguments. I like that we started from watching the video clips… I have learned the steps for constructing a claim and an argument. It is very clear structure. If I weren't provided with any model, any opportunity to practice and any information about the debate format, I wouldn't have know-how to perform debate. [Paula]*

In my view, creating the dialogues between the researcher and participant to encourage the participants to respond and reflect on their experience in the tasks was a means of learning. The research evidence suggested that the dialogues provided the participants with opportunities to make meanings of their experience. The participants' interpretation of their actions and their responses in the dialogues revealed what they had internalised from their interactions with the cultural and psychological tools in the scaffolding tasks and debate.

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[52] These included Wanda, Tam, Sally, Nala, Priya, Paula, Patrick, Paul, Sebastian, Patricia, Nicole, Paris, Sydney, Kate, Rosie, Tulip, Alice, Tereza, Sergio, Tim and Page.

6.5 **Conclusion**

The analysis of the data allowed me to generate understandings about the mediated actions of the participants and the properties of the mediational tools. To help understand the phenomena, I explored the factors behind the mediated actions of the participants. The first issue to be highlighted concerns the importance of emotions in carrying out the activities. The emotions and anxieties expressed by the participants both during the activity and in the interviews appeared to be influenced by their self-awareness of their perceived weaknesses and some certain conditions of the tasks. The anxiety which hindered the behaviour and motives of a range of one specific group of students was caused from their perceptions of their low state of English language abilities, their fear of arguing with unfamiliar peers or those who were perceived to be stronger students, peer relationships, the characteristics of debate and an unfamiliar debate topic. Despite the anxiety, many students put significant effort into accomplishing the tasks, especially debate. Some participants viewed their engagement in the tasks as an opportunity for learning, risk taking and capacity building. It is crucial not to underestimate the emotions of the students as they can hinder or enhance the development of argumentation skills.

With regard to the issues around knowledge and understanding, debate provided the platform for the participants to utilise a repertoire of cognitive and language skills. It was interesting to uncover that the background knowledge of the participants was likely to enable as well as constrain their mediated actions in the tasks. Thus, prior knowledge and experience can empower as well as limit the performance of the students. While background knowledge facilitated content preparation for debate, insufficient prior knowledge can hinder searching for and incorporating new information. Additionally, the evidence showed that English language abilities can empower or constrain the way the participants mediated their performance in the tasks. The analysis of the findings raised an awareness that perceived English language difficulties resulted in some constraints in the tasks. The use of English language skills in debate made the participants become aware that they were required to employ the tools that they had not mastered in the provided situation. Overall, the participants'

negative feedback about their use of English language in debate involved representations of meaning, accuracy and fluency. In consequence, any constraints imposed by the mediational means appeared to cause some anxiety.

With regard to the issues around argumentation skills, for the participants, the debate task appeared to present an unfamiliar process of informational content and impede some of them from completing the task easily. This implies that the participants' exposure to the scaffolding tasks was inadequate for assisting them to fully move to self-regulation in the ZPD. The scaffolding tasks were purposefully carried out step-by-step to develop the knowledge and skills of argumentation. During the scaffolding process, the participants received guidance and feedback from the teacher/researcher. Although student-student interaction in the debate task provided the conditions for the development of argumentation skills, the design of the debate format in this research required an individual's use of cognitive skills in a simultaneous situation. As discussed in Section 6.4.1, the participants considered the debate as complex because of its format of processing informational content and constructing robust arguments in a simultaneous and impromptu situation. The literature tells us that using cognitive processing and cognitive operation at the same time in certain situations is a complicated process and difficult for learners, especially when they lacked prior exposure to debating practices. The evidence showed that more scaffolding activities appeared to be essential for the development of cognitive skills and supporting the participants to move to the next level of development.

The aforementioned findings allowed me to become aware of the issues in relations to emotions, knowledge and understanding and critical thinking and argumentation, which were brought out by the mediational tools used in this research. An exploration of what could be the factors for the participants' mediated actions in the tasks can generate better understanding of the phenomenon. In the next chapter, I present and discuss the themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview data. The research findings helped to explain how the historical, cultural and institutional contexts of the participants shaped their mediated actions in the tasks.

This research also included the semi-structured interviews after the participation in the task. Although the dialogues between me as a researcher and the participants were not actually part of my pedagogical design, they were intended to encourage the participants' reflections on their mediated action. However, I realised that the interviews were extremely useful and it is suggested that having a dialogical reflection element as part of the scaffolding process is important in terms of helping to develop the students' understanding of the meanings of the learning activities.

Chapter 7 EFL classroom practices at Thai university and students' perspectives about learning of argumentation

7.1 Overview

This chapter presents the findings from my exploration, through interviews, of the sociocultural practices in the EFL classrooms that the participants had previously experienced in high schools and the university. The exploration of the sociocultural contexts allowed me to understand how the social, cultural and institutional environments may have influenced the participants' perspectives on their experiences of critical thinking at the university. As discussed in Chapter 4, in sociocultural theory, the human mind is understood to be socially and culturally mediated into higher mental functions through interactions with people in society or with physical or symbolic artefacts which are socially and culturally constructed and inherited from one generation to another (Vygotsky, 1978, 1998). Underpinned by this theory, my data analysis focused on to what extent the mediators (e.g. teachers and peers) and mediating artefacts (e.g. English language, organised learning activities and teaching and learning materials) with which the participants interacted in the EFL classrooms prior to participating in this study, may have shaped students' experiences of critical thinking. As such, this chapter responds to the research question:

RQ2: How do the social and cultural practices previously experienced by the participants shape their predispositions to engage in argumentative debates in university EFL classes?

In this chapter, I present the findings from the interviews with the forty-two participants (two from the second pilot study and thirty-eight from the main study). After the participants performed the argumentation tasks, the one-on-one, semi-structured interviews were carried out in order to encourage the participants to reflect on their engagement in the debate and the scaffolding tasks. The analysis of the interview data presented in this chapter was carried out on distinct sections of the data which exemplified the participants' reflections on their previous experience in EFL classrooms. The transcripts of the interview data were analysed using the qualitative

approach of thematic analysis. The data reported in this chapter was representative of the whole group and offered significant insights despite emerging from a few participants. This chapter is organised around four major themes which are associated with the sociocultural practices in the EFL classrooms that the students have experienced.

The first theme is concerned with the premise that high schools have a vested interest in the university admission examination process, and that this influences a motivational disparity between teachers and students in the teaching and learning of English. This first theme arose from the accounts of seven participants who spontaneously raised this issue in the interview. The second theme discusses the fifteen participants' reports of their limited exposure to English language production and how this hindered their English language development. The third theme addresses the thirteen participants' reliance on the scripts for public speaking tasks. The last theme is concerned with the influence of a classroom atmosphere on twenty-five participants' contribution to classroom dialogues. The emergence of the theme confirmed that the cohort's contribution was dependent on how well teachers were able to create positive classroom atmosphere and how open they were to different views of students.

7.2 Vested interest of high schools in English language teaching

The students reported that prior teaching and learning were directed towards enabling the students to compete for their places at universities[53]. As mentioned earlier, this theme emerged from the interviews in response to the questions, which were spontaneously devised. Seven participants[54] reported learning English grammar and structure in the EFL classrooms in their high schools. According to Abigail's and Tam's interview excerpts, both participants considered that the objective of the EFL

[53] With regard to the conditions of university entrance examinations, the participants competed for university places through the exam system called 'Admission' which was used between 2010 and 2012. Apart from the Grade Point Average reported by their high schools, this system required the results from the General Aptitude Test (GAT) and the Professional and Academic Aptitude Test (PAT). The GAT, a paper-based test, assesses two domains: (1) reading, writing and analysing and problem-solving skills and (2) communication skills in English.
[54] These included Talisha, Abigail, Nadia, Wanda, Tam, Ted and Nala.

classrooms which they had experienced was to develop and enhance the students' abilities to be able to deal with the university admission examinations.

> *The content in the classrooms mainly involved familiarising and handling university admission examinations. [Abigail]*

> *Three class sessions per week were allocated to grammar and structure. I acquired this kind of knowledge from the school, but I picked up speaking skills from taking lessons at the British Council. [Tam]*

An interesting finding to emerge related to how one participant, Abigail, experienced learning and practicing the use of vocabulary and common expressions in English through writing exercises rather than speaking tasks. As Abigail stated:

> *What happened in communication classes in my high schools in which there were, approximately, 50 students in one class, was that conversations were presented to the students through listening or reading texts. Then the students wrote the answers to complete the conversations. In some sessions in which we learned expressions useful for a certain situation such as introducing tourist attractions, we were then assigned to write our scripts without chance to give oral presentation. [Abigail]*

Within those given classroom activities, the research evidence indicated that the motives of this group of students did not align with those of the teachers. According to the students who wanted to discuss this topic, their teachers promoted the mediation of English language learning by reducing it to grammar and structure rules and solely using reading texts and sampling examination papers because of their focus on helping the students to pass the university admission examinations. This form of mediation may not have disadvantaged the students whose objective was only to pass the admission examinations. However, for those students who appeared to find English intrinsically interesting, they are likely to put more value on English communication skills than grammar and structure. It should be noted that the participants did not ignore the importance of the knowledge of grammar and structure. What they were concerned with was how ELT was overly focused on grammar and reading skills to the detriment of communication skills. Talisha's excerpt below indicated that she was of the view that the knowledge of grammar and structure only served a short-term goal although it enabled her to deal with the university admission examinations.

> *I was trained to be able to deal with the examinations…. I received relatively high marks in several examinations. However, I fell completely silent when I needed to speak English…. In the classrooms, I could handle reading texts and grammar, but I struggled using English in real-life situations. It wasn't okay. [Talisha]*

As the ability to communicate in English fluently and accurately is the motive of the participants, a knowledge of grammar and structure alone appeared to be inadequate for them to be able to handle communications in English, particularly, conversational English. The interview excerpts of Wanda and Ted illustrated their disappointment with their prior English learning experience. Their expectations about the teaching and learning of English was that classroom activities should facilitate and promote the development of English communication skills. According to their experiences, the classroom activities were carried out in a passive teaching style and the teaching materials were developed in strict accordance with the content of the examinations.

> *I questioned why the teachers paid much attention to grammar rather than speaking and writing. Why grammar? I was introduced to grammar, but I wasn't given many opportunities to write. What was the point to learn English? If speaking was the focus, why I rarely had a chance to speak English even after acquiring grammar. My point is why Thai students like me needed to learn lots of grammar. Was teaching and learning English aimed at being able to deal with the examinations only? [Wanda]*

> *I think English examination in GAT couldn't measure the actual abilities of the students in English communication. It was too difficult. I felt like I put too much effort in preparing myself for the examinations. I felt like what I studied in the first academic year at the university was completely different from high schools. Although there was an overlapping of content, studying at the university required more skills in sharing views and experience. [Ted]*

The observation from some participants that their teachers had different goals and motives are likely to have had an impact on their views about the way English was mediated. The interview excerpts demonstrated that when Talisha, Wanda and Ted came into contact with the classroom activities, they attempted to make sense of the artefacts. The outcome of their engagement in those mediational means was that they began to think of their limited exposure to the productive skills, particularly speaking skills. Talisha's interview excerpt implied that she started to think of herself as an EFL learner who possessed grammatical and syntactic knowledge but was less capable of speaking English in authentic situations. One might draw upon Vygotsky's concept of internalisation to explain Talisha's perception of her grammatical knowledge and

ability to deal with the examination questions. That Talisha was confident to handle the examination questions clearly indicated a competent process of internalisation. To illustrate, after Talisha interacted with the English language artefacts which were mediated for promoting her capacity in dealing with the examination questions, her mediated actions were internalised and operated to become her higher mental functions. In contrast, Talisha struggled with responding to conversations in English in real-life situations and this was due to her limited exposure to these kinds of skills. These learnings have not been internalised and become transposed into her higher mental functions. Within that situation, Talisha chose to be silent. As she reported:

> *When I was a high school student, I did well in English language examinations. However, I was, like, completely silent when communicating in English. I was unconfident and thought that I was unable to deal with it. In the first semester of my study at the university, I was still not confident in speaking English even in an Oral Communication classroom in which the students were required to do role-plays. I remembered at that time I was very nervous and chose to be quiet. [Talisha]*

For the teachers, the students reported that learning of English is conceived as goal directed. The intention of the teachers in providing the students with the knowledge and skills necessary for handling English examinations were shaped by the policy of the high schools. Wanda's interview, for example, suggested that assisting the students to pass the university admission examinations was one of the primary goals of the high schools. Obviously, increasing the number of students who were accepted to study at a university was important for the reputations of the high schools. As Wanda illustrated:

> *My first and second high schools paid an attention to the number of students who passed the university admission examinations because it resulted in their rankings. As long as providing support for the students to pass the admission examinations was the goal of the high schools, the teachers provided their instruction to serve that goal. No wonder why we learn English through dealing with the examination questions. [Wanda]*

The evidence presented above highlights the high school experiences of the participants in mastering English language through symbolic tools and organised learning activities. The high schools emphasised the facilitation of their students in succeeding with the admission examinations. The teachers considered the forms of mediation they employed in their English classrooms appropriate and efficient to comply with the goal set by the high school. However, there was a mismatch between

some participants' expectations of the development of their English language skills and the focus of the teachers on the language skills that directly responded to the institutional constraints. This group treated the English communication ability as a life skill. Their long-term goal for learning English was to excel in English communication, particularly the ability to speak fluently. They wished that they had learned and practiced the use of vocabulary and expressions in authentic communicative situations, rather than only grammar and structure and writing exercises.

7.2.1 **Low-level exposure to English language production**

This section is centred on the students' report of having limited opportunities to engage in English language production in the EFL classrooms at the university and how this was less likely to promote the process of internalisation of English linguistic knowledge. The theme was developed in accordance with the findings which indicated that the number of speaking courses offered in the EFL degree programme at the university did not meet the anticipation of many students. Fifteen participants[55] expressed their concerns over the limited number of communication units offered in the programme[56] and limited opportunities to practice voicing the English language. This group of participants were of the view that being exposed to speaking tasks only in three semesters out of eight in the study programme was inadequate for the improvement of their speaking skills. That the speaking units were not allocated proportionally in the programme was articulated in the following excerpts from three of the fifteen participants.

> *Only three speaking courses were offered in the study programme. I think only three units, including Oral Communication I and II and Presentation Skills in English, are not enough. [Shane]*

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[55] These included Talisha, Wanda, Nadine, Pam, Shannon, Shane, Paul, Sebastian, Nicole, Paris, Rosie, Alice, Nancy, Kelly and Natalie.

[56] According to the programme of the Bachelor of Arts in EFL in which the participants were enrolled in the academic year 2014, there were twenty-two compulsory units: eleven in the English skills area, six in the domain of literature and five relates to linguistics (see Appendix 14). Considering the list, the units in the skills area outnumbered those of the other two domain. Amongst the eleven units in the skills stream, three units were intended to develop the students' speaking skills - Oral Communication I, Oral Communication II and Presentation Skills in English. Another five focus on reading and writing, two concern translation skills and the last one concerns English language and culture.

Although many students realised that writing skills were crucial, they wished to be exposed to speaking more than writing. More units which focus on speaking skills should be included in the degree programme. [Rosie]

The number of units of literature and linguistics mainstream in the study programme were marginally greater than those of speaking. We learned loads of content from the literature and linguistic textbooks. [Sebastian]

The above interview excerpts confirmed the disappointment of the participants in the degree programme due to the limited number of speaking modules. Apparently, after the students had taken the three compulsory speaking units, there were no academic components in which they were required to directly deal with speaking tasks. The rest of the compulsory units available in the degree programme emphasised writing, knowledge and content. The evidence showed a disparity between the students' needs and a deficiency of opportunity for them to produce language in conversational English. It can be seen that the participants viewed the programme as language courses in which they would be exposed to English language production in conversations. On the contrary, the institution provided students with the academic programme of study rather than language courses.

In addition, the interview data from the same group of the participants confirmed that their endeavours were directed to the development of their productive skills in English, particularly speaking skills, rather than the receptive skills. The excerpts below signalled that these participants sought an opportunity to engage in using speaking skills in English more than it was routinely offered in the courses.

The courses available in the programme were different from what I expected.... Similar to many students in my year, we expected that the programme emphasised communication skills, especially speaking skills. In reality, it wasn't like that. Many students, including me, felt disappointed. [Wanda]

The students in my year and I have the similar concern that we should have more opportunities to use speaking skills. It is hard to improve speaking skills. I mean, we have a limited opportunity. We have learned English, but the chance to orally communicate in English was limited. [Nicole]

These excerpts clearly demonstrate that the students had limited exposure to English language production, particularly oral production. However, we need to recognise that these participants were not taking a language skill courses. Rather, they were doing an

academic programme of study. Hence, this is one of the reasons why they viewed their English language not as proficient as they would like it to be. English language output, both oral and written, play a role in promoting English language learning. Swain (2000) argues that the use of the target language through interactions mediates the language learning. The classroom activities that require verbalisation of English language provide a context for the students to be active in their learning. In English oral production, the students are required to transform their thoughts into linguistic forms through semantic, syntactic and grammatical processing and speech mechanisms in order to meet meanings and communicative goals. The written or oral output encourages L2 learners to process language with more mental effort than does input (Swain, 1995). They apply knowledge they have internalised into English language production. When they encounter a problem in producing English forms, they are required to find a solution, seeking aid from other artefacts (e.g. dictionary) or human mediators. When they are able to produce linguistic forms without asking for any assistance from other artefacts, it marks the presence of their learning development in which linguistic knowledge has already been mentally situated.

This research argues that the oral production of English language promotes students' development of English language skills. That the students use English as a mediational tool to articulate their thoughts in communicative tasks is part of the process which promotes internalisation. I took the Swain and Lapkin's (1995a) views that language production is a means of communication and a tool for thinking and interactions in L2 lead to L2 learning. The expectation of the authors that cognitive activity is apparent in dialogues has been, to a large extent, underpinned by the work of Vygotsky (1978) and other sociocultural theorists (e.g., Lantolf and Appel, 1994; Newman, Griffin and Cole, 1989; Wertsch, 1991). Those theorists highlight the impact of interactions in social activities and the use of language as a mediating tool to operationalise the activities on the cognitive processes. Indeed, the interview excerpts of Priya and Talisha confirmed that they were appreciative of the opportunity to produce language in the speaking units. In addition, both participants asserted that their speaking skills were considerably developed through their engagement in the interactions with the teachers and the activities in the classrooms. Their statements highlight how important it is to

receive mediating support for the speaking tasks and how that contributed to an improvement of the speaking skills of the students. Likewise, Shannon's statements exhibited her concern regarding the negative consequences of limited exposure to communicative activities for the retarded development of her English communication skills.

> *After the second year of my study in which I have already taken Oral Communication I and II and Presentation Skills in English, I gained more confident to speak and talk to the teachers in English. [Priya]*
>
> *Compared to my speaking skills when I was at high school and in the first semester, I think the current stage of my speaking skills has much improved.... Although it might not be as good as other classmates, I think it is alright. Last semester I took the unit called Presentation Skills in English and it was run by a native English-speaking teacher, Justine. In his classroom, I engaged in lots of speaking and presentations in English. [Talisha]*
>
> *I feel like my speaking skills have been going backwards because of limited exposure to speaking tasks. The classroom activities that I have been exposed to is beneficial only to my receptive skills. I think I rarely had chance to deal with expressing my views in speaking. [Shannon]*

Language production in social interactions plays a part in the internalisation process and the process of the students' L2 learning development is associated with the extent to which they engage in communicative activities (Swain, 1995; 2000; Swain and Lapkin, 1995a, 1995b; Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). A low-level exposure of the students to communicative activities in the EFL classroom and their limited employment of English language as a mediational tool to verbalise their meanings was less likely to help promote the process of internalisation of English linguistic knowledge. Therefore, the participants struggled with criticality in debate and found the task challenging. Debate went beyond their experiences of practicing criticality offered in the study programme. The point to be emphasised is that I need to recognise the participants' needs. However, my view is not that more speaking courses should be prioritised or replace some other courses in the academic programme. Rather, I argue that we should distribute more opportunities for students to be exposed to critical thinking across the study programme.

7.3 **Students' reliance on scripting speech in English language production**

In response to the grading criteria of the three English communication units offered in the degree programme[57], it is not surprising that the participants reported that an excellent speaker should be able to communicate in the tasks with accuracy and fluency. In order to produce a language output which can meet this excellent level of language proficiency, some students were in favour of preparing scripts for their talks beforehand. Thirteen participants[58] reported that the task performance of the students in the three oral communication courses was usually the outcome of how well verbatim scripts were written and how much they could memorise the script.

> *The presentations that I gave in Oral Communication I and II and Presentation Skills in English were all about script preparation beforehand. [Talisha]*
>
> *During my presentations I frequently forgot the content written on the scripts. Despite having a note in my hand, I still made lots of mistakes. Although I vocally rehearsed several times before giving a presentation, I still felt nervous and made mistakes. [Karina]*
>
> *I think my performance in oral presentations depended on how well I wrote the scripts and how much I practiced beforehand. [Nadine]*
>
> *I had a few days to prepare myself out of classes before giving an oral presentation. I had time to polish the script and rehearsed the talk. [Adele]*

It can be seen from the above excerpts that scripting speech and practicing was crucial for some participants and it cannot be overstated how important it is for these participants to script speech for their talks. First, the process of script writing which involves manipulating sentence structure should not be simply seen as a process of enhancing memory, recording thoughts and transmitting information. Rather, writing a script involves the act of transforming thoughts and manipulating sentence structure and requires an integration of different parts of thinking (Haave, 2015). Writing scripts encouraged the participants to apply knowledge and skills which have been

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[57] In these courses, the tasks that the students were required to deal mainly involved role-plays, interviews, oral presentations and dialogic discussions. Apart from taking class attendance and participation into account, the students were graded in accordance with how well they performed in these tasks. Pronunciation, lexical resource, fluency and grammatical accuracy are the key elements of the grading criteria.

[58] These included Talisha, Karina, Nadine, Tam, Priya, Adele, Shannon, Ted, Shane, Paris, Tulip, Alice and Page.

internalised into the process because writing "presupposes the existence of inner speech" (Vygotsky, 1987a, p. 204). Furthermore, script speech can signify the mental development of the participants. It encouraged the participants to monitor how adequately they could manage target language production. The act of producing language (speaking or writing) may prompt L2 learners to notice that they struggle with how to articulate precisely the meaning they wish to convey (Swain, 1995; 2000). In writing, one must learn to externalise his or her inner speech in a syntactic way in order to produce language output which is comprehended by an interlocutors (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). When the linguistic knowledge which is necessary for English language output had not been internalised, they encountered some limitations in processing the language. That L2 learners may face a linguistic problem during the production of the target language may prompt them to consciously notice their linguistic limitation aware of working out solution (Swain, 1995, 2000; Swain and Lapkin, 1995b). The research findings showed that the participants noticed their linguistic limitations and worked out solution using material artefacts like scripts to help with the oral production. Some research studies investigating the applications of the ZPD concept have been applied to individual and collective interactions with artefacts (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). The participants' learning can be mediated through symbolic tools and other material artefacts they employed while carefully thinking content out and producing linguistic forms in English.

In addition, rehearsing the presentation scripts mediated the process of internalisation of content and linguistic knowledge. That the participants verbally practiced presentation scripts took on an egocentric speech[59] function. When children struggle with solving a problem by themselves, they ask for assistance from an adult. At this stage, language takes on an interpersonal function. The stage of egocentric speech occurs when children instruct themselves in choosing an appropriate symbolic tool and develop their method of behaviour. The ability to use language takes place after the aid of speech was psychologically endowed to the children themselves. Likewise, verbally

[59] The act of a child talking to himself or herself through an activity. The concept of the child's egocentric speech involves the transitional process from external to internal speech is a fundamental aspect of Vygotsky's (1978) theory.

rehearsing the presentation scripts, which is external speech can be the basis for internal speech. Literature in L2 learning (e.g. Swain, 1995, 2000; Swain and Lapkin, 1995a; 1995b; Lantolf and Thorne, 2006) highlights that language learners internalise L2 through speaking out loud. One of the pedagogical principles derived from Gal'perin's theory of higher mental functions (1979) is verbalisation as a means of assisting the internalisation process (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). While children create external speech to serve their needs for assistance from adults when encountering a problem, the participants used speech scripting and verbal rehearsal as a problem-solving tool for the oral presentation task. Both children and the participants come into contact with psychological tools and artefacts, all of which are the products of culture, historical and institutional development (Wertsch, 1991).

In contrast, seven participants[60] expressed their concerns over the employment of scripts as mediational tools. Although this tool appeared to be advantageous for the students in handling English language production and giving presentations, three participants (Adele, Alice and Talisha) were of the opinion that it was less likely to measure or reflect the current stage of the students' abilities in English language production. Rather, they considered that any advance performances were the result of how well they prepared and were able to memorise the scripts.

> *Being given time to prepare good scripts and practice several days prior to the presentations was less likely to be able to see the actual abilities of the students in English communication skills, compared to impromptu speech. [Adele]*
>
> *I think saying every single word written on scripts is not delivering a presentation, rather, reading out loud in front of a classroom. Speaking should involve interactions in authentic situations. [Alice]*
>
> *The students who wrote good scripts and rehearsed several times, definitely, performed well in their presentations. [Talisha]*

Furthermore, four participants[61] were of the view that an overreliance on scripts reduced the development of an ability to deal with interactions in a spontaneous situation which would require an improvisation in conversational English.

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[60] These included Adele, Alice, Talisha, Nadine, Nala, Shane and Page.
[61] These included Nadine, Nala, Shane and Page.

It seemed to be that I articulated relatively well in my presentation. This is because, I wrote and memorised scripts for my presentations in advance. However, if I had to improvise my talk, that would, definitely, be problematic for me. [Nadine]

I think what I articulated in my presentations sounded brilliant. However, in real life situations, my articulation in English was completely broken and ungrammatical. [Nala]

With the script I prepared in advance, I was able to articulate my thoughts fluently in the presentations in the oral communication units. However, in real life interactions which require immediate response such as in a conversation with my boss in a workplace, I won't be given time to prepare any script prior to the dialogue. [Shane]

Apparently, English major students seem to speak English fluently. This is because, majority of us prepared our scripts for the presentations in advance. I am sure that in an impromptu speech I won't be able to speak English fluently. [Page]

With regard to the above concern, I would argue that speech scripting and rehearsing acts as the scaffolding processes for the students who are not able to achieve the presentation tasks without support from artefacts or a more knowledgeable colleague. The seven participants' report of reliance of speech scripting suggested that the students might not yet have mastered sufficient linguistic knowledge and productive skills which would allow them to handle the presentations on their own. Rather, they still required support from artefacts to bring about the execution of the tasks. The writing and verbal rehearsing of scripts was the scaffolding process in which English linguistic forms and knowledge were mediated through their interactions with the artefacts they employed and their actions. The increased level of development was the result of the students making sense of the mediational tools they came into contact with and their actions and it was internalised into their mental functions. At this stage, the participants will be able to produce English language for the presentations by themselves without looking for any assistance from artefacts or someone else. This can support Bruner's view about scaffolding.

> [Scaffolding] refers to the steps taken to reduce the degrees of freedom in carrying out some task so that the child can concentrate on the difficult skills she is in the process of acquiring. (Bruner, 1978, p. 19)

7.4 Influence of classroom atmosphere on students' contribution to discussions

Dialogues and interactions between people are social functions and internalisation involves the transformation of social functions into individual functions. As outlined in Vygotsky's (1978) work, the internalisation of higher mental function originates in the relations between human individuals. Grounding my data analysis in relation to the participants' experiences of EFL classroom interactions, it can be argued that, as human mediators, the teachers who are encouraging and broadminded play a significant role in the student's development of higher mental functions. Additionally, peer groups and relationships can promote a friendly classroom atmosphere which facilitates the process of learning. The following sections deal with two sub-themes in relations to the role of human mediators in social activities which promotes the process of higher mental functions. The emergence of the first sub-theme highlights the impact of a teacher's characteristics on the students' willingness and involvement in classroom dialogues. The second sub-theme involves the role of peer groups and relationships in creating a classroom atmosphere which facilitates the developmental process of higher mental functions.

7.4.1 Impact of teacher characteristics on students' willingness to engage in discussions

Classroom dialogues in the EFL classrooms are intended to promote participatory learning. However, my interviews made it clear that the extent to which students are willing to engage in the dialogues depended on teachers' characteristics. The main emphasis of this section is how students reported how the characteristics of the teachers played a part in classroom dialogues that the students can become involved in.

As discussed in section 7.2.1, due to the limited number of speaking courses offered in the degree programme at the university, the participants sought an opportunity to practice their speaking skills in the EFL classrooms. The only way they could do so was through classroom dialogues. A significant majority (twenty-eight participants) reported that the teacher-led, whole-class discussion were commonly incorporated in

the EFL classrooms at the university. For example, Paris, Nadia and Priya reported their experiences:

> *I like participating in discussions, especially in the literature classrooms. Unlike linguistic units which focused on its theory, I think the literature classrooms required sharing and exchanging views. [Paris]*
>
> *There were lots of discussions going on in my classroom of the Presentation Skills in English. Lots of students contributed in the discussions. There were some students who seemed enjoyed sharing their views and raising questions. [Nadia]*
>
> *Classroom discussions were part of the teaching and learning in the unit called English in Mass Media. I enjoyed it. I think it encouraged me to think about a certain issue and I gained some knowledge with regard to that issues from the discussions. [Priya]*

Despite their motivation and the opportunity, seventeen participants[62] argued that the students' contribution to the discussions was dependent on the way the teachers led the discussions and responded to the students' ideas and, to some degree, on other characteristics of the teachers. With regard to the way the teachers conducted the discussion, nine participants[63] confirmed that the teachers who managed to create a positive atmosphere for discussion and encouraged the students were able to promote an engagement and a contribution from the students in the discussions. For example, Nadia, Sally and Paris mentioned a lecturer who was supportive in the way he managed his classrooms and had a positive effect on their participation in the discussions.

> *In the classroom "Presentation in English" Justine, the teacher, often asked discussion questions. There were lots of interactions and discussions going on… In the first few sessions, Justine asked questions and picked some students to share ideas. After we were familiar with him, sometimes it was some of us initiating the questions. [Nadia]*
>
> *In the Poetry classroom, Justine often initiated questions and called us by names to interact and exchange ideas with him. After all of us became familiar with him, he no longer needed to call us by names anymore. Many of us immediately responded to his questions, rather than waiting to be called to answer the questions. [Sally]*
>
> *What was happening in a literature unit was that Justine, the teacher, raised questions and encouraged all students to answer his questions. Although we didn't know any answer,*

[62] These included Nadia, Sally, Shannon, Beatrix, Patricia, Paris, Kate, Rosie, Sergio, Wanda, Karina, Paula, Sage, Ted, Sebastian, Nancy and Priya.
[63] These included Nadia, Sally, Shannon, Beatrix, Patricia, Paris, Kate, Rosie and Sergio.

instead of giving up and moving on didn't give up, no, he kept encouraging us to think and shared our ideas. [Paris]

The excerpts presented above confirmed that the teacher who positioned himself as a facilitator encouraged the students to become involved in the discussions and opened the door for these students to interact with mediating agents (e.g. teachers, peers, learning activities and English language). Initiation-response-feedback (IRF) (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975) was the typical sequence that the participants experienced in these teacher-led, whole-class discussions. First, the teachers pointed out problems or raised questions and anticipated responses from the students. In turn, responses from the teachers to the students' answers might provide clues to correct answers or explanation. The IRF structure allowed the teachers to control the direction and the flow of the discussion and assist the students. The interaction within the IRF structure in which the teacher triggered the students' cognition and assisted them to achieve the pedagogical objectives can be characterised as an instance of scaffolding (Kinginger, 2002). As the function of the teachers in the IRF construct is initiating the dialogues through questioning and prompting, to what extent the dialogues can effectively provide scaffolding appeared to be dependent to how well the teacher conducted the dialogue. Shannon's excerpt highlights the teacher's ability to successfully handle classroom dialogues to engage students in learning of the subject content.

I really enjoyed Narrative classroom. Dr. Shiza's, the lecturer, is smart and very open. She raised questions to guide the students to think along… She seemed enjoy listening to the students' different views and gives the students her supportive responses. This keeps encouraging the students to think along... With the positive classroom atmosphere, the students, including me, were keen to share ideas. [Shannon]

Apart from encouragement, the participants reported that the open-mindedness of the teachers in the teacher-led, whole-class discussion was another significant factor for the involvement of the participants in the discussions. For the participants, being open-minded concerned the willingness of the teacher to listen to and consider their ideas. Moreover, the way the teacher provided responses in the discussion should create a positive atmosphere for the discussion. Although the ideas the students share might be inaccurate, the students commented that an open-minded teacher should not be

judgemental or surprised with what they hear. Nine participants[64] reported that their involvement in the whole-class discussion was due to how the open-minded nature of the teacher. For example, Paula, Nancy and Sage shared their views:

> *I participated in the whole-class discussions in almost all units that opened the floor for the students. My contribution to the discussions depended on the lecturers…. In the classroom of "Narratives in Prose" the lecturer, Norah, listened to the students' ideas and were open to our interpretations. She responded to our views, saying that there was no right or wrong answer, depending on how we supported our reasons. [Paula]*

> *I often participated in the discussions in literature and English skill classrooms. In the literature classrooms, the teacher often encouraged the students to analyse and evaluate the arguments. I enjoyed the discussions so much. Although my answers might not make sense enough, the teacher's response never made me feel embarrassed or discouraged. [Nancy]*

> *I prefer a teacher who is open to students' ideas rather than sticking to ideas or answers that he or she thinks to be. The teacher should also be able to guide the students to the direction in which they will be able to think and provide relevant or correct answers by themselves. [Sage]*

The importance of teachers being open-minded and providing students with positive responses in whole-class discussions was reconfirmed in the interview data of other interviewees who had unpleasant experience of contribution in the discussions. Seven participants[65] reported receiving discouraging reactions from their teachers during their engagement in the whole class discussions. Consequently, they gave up participating in whole-class discussions in some units. For example, Wanda, Karina Paula and Beatrix expressed their negative attitudes towards participation in discussions in the literature classrooms:

> *My view about the literature classes is that the students should have freedom to analyse reading texts and make their arguments. Although I advanced my ideas with supporting information, sometimes my thoughts were not be approved but framed in such a way that the teachers had in mind… Their reactions to my answers that weren't close to their answers sometimes made me feel demotivated. Sometimes they didn't even let me finish my sentences. No wonder why other students didn't want to say anything either. Their negative reactions made me feel like I was a wrong doer. [Wanda]*

> *A literature unit that I took the students seemed quiet. This might be caused by the negative reactions of the teacher to the students' answers that didn't make sense in her opinion. Instead of encouraging the students to engage and express their views or indirectly guide us to the right direction. Her responses clearly showed that didn't approve our ideas.*

[64] These included Wanda, Karina, Paula, Shannon, Sage, Ted, Beatrix, Sebastian and Nancy.
[65] These included Wanda, Karina, Priya, Paula, Beatrix, Sebastian and Kate.

I feel like some teachers want to win arguments. My participation in a whole-class discussion depends on personality of the teacher. [Karina]

There was a classroom that I gave up sharing my views in the discussions due to the teacher's negative reaction to my answers. While I was talking, she interrupted me saying "I know, I know, I know." I noticed her dissatisfaction from facial expression. Since then, I didn't want to share any ideas in that class. [Paula]

I was very quiet in whole-class discussions… I was afraid of giving wrong answers. What made me thought like this came from my experience. I responded to a teacher's question with an incorrect answer. Then the teacher reacted to my answer complaining that I didn't prepare myself well enough for the class and I didn't read the text thoroughly. [Beatrix]

These excerpts clearly show that the teachers who are not receptive to the students' ideas and expressions and who provided negative feedback disrupted not only the students' contributions but also the process of internalisation. Despite supporting social mediation and dialogic interaction, Lantolf and Thorn (2006) point out that not all interaction or assistance is productive. Their observation suggests that several forms of 'assistance' in classroom settings may do more to debilitate and alienate students than to support their development. According to Kinginger's (2002) observations, dialogic interaction in an instructional discourse is generally considered as beneficial; however, its quality has to be scrutinised in terms of the distribution of power in the classroom. The discussion within the IRF structure marks the power of the teachers in controlling the students' participation. The students were invited to share their opinions, but not feel authorised to control the flow and the order of the discussion, or to initiate other discussion topics. The teachers who were not fully open for any different or inaccurate opinions and gave discouraging feedback unsuccessfully mediated the discussions. Consequently, this alienated the students from the discussions and hindered the opportunity for the students to reach the pedagogical objectives. In contrast, the open-minded teachers who listened carefully and were receptive provided the students with the space to create new meanings and pursue their contribution.

The interviews highlighted the importance for students of the role of teachers in creating classroom dialogues with the students in the form of teacher-led, whole-class discussion. With the teachers' assistance in mediating the subject knowledge, that kind of social interaction can be characterised as scaffolding in accordance with the concept

of ZPD. When the students interacted with mediating agents (e.g. teachers, peers, symbolic tools, artefacts) in the discussions, it later became internalised into the students' mental functions. However, the whole process of internalisation was not be possible without the students' willingness to engage in the discussions. The discussion within an IRF structure which provided the teacher with the power in initiating and controlling the students' participation alone was not adequate for encouraging and creating the appropriate atmosphere. To what extent the participants were willing to contribute to the discussions depended on how encouraging and open-minded the teachers were in conducting the discussions.

7.4.2 Peer relationships in promoting students' engagement in classroom dialogues

This section reviews the theme of the impact of interpersonal relationships amongst peers on the students' contribution in dialogic interactions in pedagogical contexts. The discussion and explanation of the phenomenon was carried out within the framework of ZPD. Apart from adult-child interaction and teacher-student interaction, the Vygotskian concept of the ZPD has included research studies and pedagogical innovations which focus on peer interaction (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). With regard to peer interactions, Vygotsky (1978) stipulated that the level of potential development could be processed and achieved through problem solving in collaboration with more capable peers. In the same way as a more competent person scaffolds a less competent person, Donato (1994) suggests that learners can mutually assist one another. Donato (2004) discusses aspects of collaboration in pedagogical discourse and notes that collaboration is a distinguishable form of interaction. In this regard, classroom contexts alone were less likely to indicate the degree of collaboration in dialogic interaction. For an interaction to be characterised as collaborative, it should involve "recognition of individuals as parts of a cooperative activity and the acceptance of the contributions of individual in the serve of a larger goal" (Donato, 2004, p. 287). That is, to what extent the dialogic interaction in the classrooms was collaborative can be observed and determined by the degree to which the students were part of a cooperative activity and their contribution in the activity.

The interview data of thirteen participants[66] showed that there were issues around the students' affiliation and their actions in small-group discussions and whole-class discussions at the university. Six participants[67] reported that their contribution in a group discussion could be held back due to the interpersonal relationships amongst the group members. For example:

> *When working with unfamiliar classmates in a small group discussion I didn't express my standpoint that much. I conformed with whatever the group members thought. [Abigail]*
> *My contribution to sharing ideas in a small group discussion depended on the relationship between the other members and myself. When I wasn't familiar with them, I didn't share my views that much. When I worked with my close friends, I was more straightforward. [Pricilla]*

> *I feel more comfortable to work with friends whom I know well. From my previous experience discussing with unfamiliar classmates, I was a bit more reserved and shared less ideas when comparing with working with my close friends. I felt more comfortable to express what I really thought. My friends and I accepted each other's different opinions. [Page]*

Apart from the interpersonal relationships among peers, the interview data of nine participants[68] also confirmed that peer pressure was a barrier for their engagement in the classroom discussions. There were two issues in relation to the peer pressure. First, the participants' contribution in the whole-class discussions was influenced by to what extent the atmosphere in the classroom encouraged their engagement. Four participants[69] preferred expressing their opinions in a relaxed classroom environment in which sharing opinions and raising questions were viewed as a common practice among the students. The classroom setting in which the students were not familiar with one another or where very few students contributed to the whole-class discussions also made the participants feel uncomfortable to voice their opinions. For them, that setting made them feel that they were in the centre of attention when sharing their views. For example, Adele and Sally described the way they responded to the classroom discussions.

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[66] These included Abigail, Pricilla, Nadia, Karina, Nadine, Sally, Priya, Adele, Nancy, Charlotte, Kelly, Tim and Page.
[67] These included Abigail, Pricilla, Nadia, Karina, Tim and Page.
[68] These included Nadine, Sally, Adele, Nancy, Charlotte, Kelly, Karina, Nadia and Priya.
[69] These included Nadine, Sally, Adele and Nancy.

Sometimes I chose to be quiet rather than saying the answers because the atmosphere in the classroom was so quiet. Whoever answered the questions or discussed with the teachers got attention from the rest. I preferred not to be in the centre of the attention. I felt uncomfortable. However, I think my contribution varied depending on the classroom environment. The classroom in which a lot of students shared ideas resulted in my contribution. [Adele]

I thought along the questions that the teachers raised, but I didn't speak my mind. I didn't want to be in the centre of attention. After starting to speak and everybody looked at me. I felt uncomfortable, especially when I had no more idea and ran out of words, but I could notice that everybody still paid to me. Everybody still direct their attention to what I was going to say next. [Sally]

Second, the findings from three participants (Karina, Nadia and Priya) implied that they relinquished a chance to engage in the discussion despite having opinions about the discussion topic. They gave way to louder students who dominated the discussions, rather than voicing their own views. Another issue to emerge was that being surrounded with the group members who were strong students made some participants feel inferior. This feeling reduced their confidence and resulted in their reduced involvement in the small-group discussions. As described in their interviews:

In Narratives in Prose, there were a few students who kept answering the teacher's questions. The rest never gave their responses although they might know the answers. [Karina]

I was a bit quiet when I was surrounded by very strong students. I completely lacked confidence in sharing my views. I was not sure if what I said made sense… I rarely shared my ideas in the classrooms in which strong students sat in the front row and immediately responded to the teachers' questions. Sometimes their answers resembled to what I thought. Therefore, I have no more words to say. [Nadia]

I was in the group of strong students. They all shared their brilliant ideas. I felt like I wasn't part of the group. There was no place for me. I felt like I was useless. [Priya]

The findings in relation to the participants' actions in small group and whole-class discussions confirmed that the extent to which the participants were willing to take part and contribute to the discussions depended on the intimacy amongst group members, which also created a relaxed classroom atmosphere. Distant social relations among the members influenced their perceptions such that they felt excluded and not part of the group. Any tense atmosphere due to an unfamiliarity amongst the group members and pressure from certain superior group members had the potential to cause feelings of isolation in some participants and obstruct their contribution in the

discussions. Consequently, that negative attitude hindered their recognition of how important their voices were in the discussions and how their contribution was part of the co-constructing the meanings. The goal of collaborative learning is not about accumulating knowledge acquisition into one another's minds; rather, it concerns "transforming individuals into participating and contributing members of social network…" (Donato, 2004, p. 289).

7.5 Students' emotions in debate and EFL classroom practices in Thai context

As reported in Chapter 6, the participants' learning through debate involves a wide range of emotional processes. Much of the anxiety of the participants provoked in debate was of a hindering nature. This debilitating anxiety was caused by a wide range of factors, including English language barriers, fear of being judged in front of unfamiliar peers, unfamiliarity with the debate topic and content matter, and difficulties with cognitive processing and operations in simultaneous situations.

Nevertheless, the experience of debate appeared to develop the disposition of autonomous thinking in some participants. Debating in English language provoked not only debilitating but also facilitating anxiety. Experience can be seen in an emotional context in which it is shaped by sociocultural-historical events (Levykh, 2008). The participants' aforementioned emotional experiences in the tasks were shaped by the contexts in which they were brought up and educated. Their emotions had an influence on their perceptions about their ability to master debate.

The analysis of the interview data generated four interrelated themes associated with the EFL classroom practices that the participants experienced at high schools and the university in Thailand. The participants' descriptions of their previous school experience strongly suggested that they grew up in an environment in which passive education is deeply embedded. Many of the participants indicated that they had relatively limited exposure to English language production classes, and, in particular, oral communication. Some of the participants highlighted how their schools equipped them with the knowledge and techniques to deal with English examination. This strongly suggests that various schools have a vested interest in university admission

examinations, as this confers greater status upon the institutes. This implies EFL teachers prioritised the mediation of English language through grammar, reading texts and analysis of samples of examination papers. However, many of the participants wished to have more exposure to allow them to develop English communication skills and conversational English. The mediational tools the participants were exposed to did not seem to meet their expectations and they were aware that those tools were less likely develop their oral communication skills. A limited opportunity to engage in social interaction and encounter symbolic tools and artefacts retarded the process of internalisation of linguistic knowledge and communication tasks. Interestingly, many of the participants' concerns over their command of spoken English influenced their expectations for the degree programme at the university.

These participants tended to be disappointed with their low-level exposure to the production of English language at the university. Apart from the assignments in the speaking courses, the only way that they were able to be exposed to the production of English language within the academic contexts was through classroom dialogues. The participants were exposed to teacher-led, whole-class discussion which are commonly used in classrooms. Although the classroom practice as such was intended to promote thinking and the sharing of thoughts, it was unable to ensure the contribution of all the students to the discussion. Classroom practice centred on facilitating the implicit transmission of the knowledge of subjects, rather than the exploration of ideas and the co-construction of knowledge. Accordingly, the students' responses during the discussion were prompted and shaped by the questions initiated by the teachers. The students were reluctant to interrupt and bring up opposing viewpoints in the discussion. In Thai culture, children are taught to show respect to elders. According to Mortlock (no date), Thai children should abide by the decisions that their parents make for them and pay attention to the suggestions teachers provide. Interrupting and challenging elders is viewed as impolite and aggressive. Thais were taught to be subtle and sympathetic in their criticism and that they appeared to take criticism personally shaped their actions in the discussions. This can be applied to understand why some participants avoided classroom discussion. This is because, they did not want to feel upset by the criticism of the teachers and they were worried over being judged by

unfamiliar peers. Interestingly, the factors which made those participants feel more comfortable to engage in the discussions included encouraging, supportive and open-minded teachers and an intimacy amongst peers.

Peer relationship played a highly significant part in the contributions of the participants to not only the discussion but also small group work. Nonetheless, small group working was incorporated for facilitating project assignments such as role-plays and oral presentation. The group work did not involve argumentative discourse where they were required to express their positions and inquire about one another's conclusions in order to co-construct knowledge or find solution together. Additionally, to handle those assignments, many participants used the approach of scripted speech in English language production because they were less likely to manage the production of English language by themselves. Their interactions with the artefacts, such as preparing a script and verbally practicing scripted speech, promoted the process of internalisation of content and linguistic knowledge.

The aforementioned constraints of Thai culture and the educational contexts that the participants were situated in operated in such a way that they keenly sought the learning environment which facilitates an enhancement of their levels of English communication skills for daily interactions and permitted, the expression of their thoughts, including critiquing or discussing opposing views. Of course, such activities helped to foster autonomous thinking skills. As described in Chapter 5, debate was employed as a major mediational tool to engage the participants in the environment and skills they needed. The themes presented in Chapter 6 indicated that many of participants showed their willingness to risk performing debate because they sought an opportunity to practice and improve their English-speaking skills and gain new learning experiences. As suggested earlier, some researchers (e.g. Poteau, 2017), have suggested that this risk-taking is associated with an extraverted character and a better performance in the TEFL classroom. Concomitantly, many of these participants had feelings of anxiety regarding their interlocutors and their performance in debate.

Thai culture and the practices in educational classrooms, and EFL classrooms in particular that they experienced shaped their perceptions about debate as unfamiliar,

formal and a competitive discourse. The sociocultural background also directly affected their actions in debate and the scaffolding tasks, particularly, when making refutation and rebuttal. This is because the participants were more familiar with memorising scripted speech when doing role-plays and giving presentations in English, rather than producing English language output in spontaneous situations. The process of making refutation and rebuttal required higher-order thinking skills (e.g. identifying, analysing and evaluate arguments) alongside simultaneous listening and speaking skills in English.

Nevertheless, a larger research study is probably required to investigate the impact of the restraints in Thai culture, the participants' experiences in the EFL classrooms and the difficulties that the students encountered with the scaffolding tasks and in the debate. Without such a study, one cannot be certain that there is an interconnection amongst these three elements. However, the evidence strongly suggests that these cultural and institutional conditions impacted on performance in debate and hindered, to some degree, the fostering of argumentation skills for the students who participated in this study.

In many western countries, particularly, the US, the beliefs in individualism, freedom of speech and self-expression appear inseverable to the concept of critical thinking. These strong cultural components are embedded in argumentative discourses such as debate and largely confined to L1 education, particularly, at the primary and secondary levels (Atkinson, 1997). The vast majority of the literature associated with debate originates in the US and the UK and confirms how debate has been widely used within the curriculum and classroom as an instructional tool to help students to engage with learning and thinking skills (Akerman and Neale, 2011). In the Thai setting, the participants were brought up under a social norm in which conformity and group harmony are emphasised. This is markedly different to the cultural context and environment in the US and UK. Therefore, I have increasingly become aware during this study that a different and specific pedagogy is required in the Thai setting due to the students' specific background and learning experiences. In Chapter 8, I propose the

key pedagogical principles for fostering argumentation skills in the EFL classroom which are suitable for Thai undergraduates.

Chapter 8 Teaching principles, contribution and limitations

8.1 Overview

In this chapter, I bring together the findings of my work with reflections on its contribution to the literature. I begin by addressing my third research question and articulating the principles that I have derived for teaching from the study. I then go on to discuss the contribution that this study makes to the wider literature, reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the study and outline the future research trajectories that have come from the work. I conclude with some reflections on how my own understanding – as a teacher and beginning researcher – has developed during the course of the inquiry.

8.2 Key principles for teaching argumentation in the EFL classroom

My review of the relevant research and professional literature has shown that there are very few specific strategies for teaching argumentation with undergraduates in EFL classrooms. This is also the case for the Thai university environment. This study uses a design-based research (DBR) approach to construct a pedagogical model which explicitly fosters argumentation skills for an English oral communication classroom at a Thai university; on the basis that building argumentation will facilitate the development of skills of identifying, analysing and evaluating arguments and evidence, processes that are essential to the development of critical thinking (see Sections 1.3, 2.2, and 3.2.1).

A DBR approach concentrates on the generation of design principles after an evaluation and reflection period. In particular, the reflection phase requires careful consideration of the various theoretical inputs, empirical outcomes and subjective responses, with the aim of constructing new understandings. Amiel and Reeves (2008) indicate that developing design principles is a continuing process that may lead to theoretical understanding:

> The outcomes of design-based research are a set of design principles or guidelines derived empirically and richly described, which can be implemented by others interested in studying similar settings and concerns. While the ultimate objective is

> the development of theory, this might only occur after long-term engagement and multiple design investigation. (Amiel and Reeves, 2008, p. 35)

This chapter deals with the final stage in the DBR which requires my reflections on the outcomes of prototyping the tools for the third iteration and which addresses my third research question:

RQ3: What principles for teaching and learning might be derived from this research study to support the teaching and learning of argumentation in EFL Oral Communication class in the Thai higher educational context?

The following principles are derived from my observations of the participants' mediated actions during the tasks and the interview transcripts of the participants. They derive from the themes which emerged from the analysis of the students' participation in the debate and the scaffolding tasks in the third iteration, as presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

My reflections revolved around the themes which emerged from the deliberations of the thirty-eight participants of their direct experiences of debate and the scaffolding tasks in the third iteration, as described in Chapter 6. My reflections were also derived from the deliberations of forty-two participants (thirty-eight participants from the main study and four participants from the second iteration) about their EFL classroom experiences and how these informed their expectations for learning argumentation at the university, as presented in Chapter 7.

In this chapter, I propose seven principles for the teaching of argumentation through debate and suggest the means for these principles be further implemented in an EFL classroom at a university in Thailand and other similar contexts. The conclusion of the chapter is concerned with the contributions and limitations of this research and my recommendation for the future research in this area.

The principles for teaching argumentation in EFL classrooms at a university in Thailand that I propose are:

- Incorporating Western-style debate into an EFL setting in Thailand is a cross-cultural challenge and requires appropriate modification;
- Confrontational debate in an EFL setting in Thailand evokes strong emotions amongst the participants;
- Debate in an EFL setting in Thailand requires an open and positive atmosphere;
- Adequate scaffolding exercises are necessary for proper internalisation of argument structure;
- Confrontational debate in an EFL setting in Thailand requires familiarity between interlocutors;
- Making the argumentative tasks engaging and 'Sanook' will encourage effective debate; and
- Scaffolding in rhetoric argumentation should be provided.

Principle 1: Incorporating Western-style debate into an EFL setting in Thailand is a cross-cultural challenge and requires appropriate modification.

On the basis of this study, it is clear that teachers should exercise caution in integrating debate and argumentation into EFL classrooms in Thailand. Debate in a public sphere is an essential feature in democratic societies and has commonly been practiced in a variety of forms in western civilisation for over 2000 years. The practice of debate and rhetorical argument is central to democratic thought in the West and helps to ensure the citizen's freedom of expression. However, debate can be carried out according to different formats and the objective of the activity. For example, debate can take the form of a public assembly in which citizens argue to determine local activities or the actions of their state or a competition in argumentation. The ultimate goal of debate is to convince, persuade and change other's minds with reasoned arguments. Some debate events are carried out with the aim to produce a consensus opinion for a problematic issue. Regardless, individuality and self-expression are essential tools in the Western world and debate offers an open and safe space for people with opposing viewpoints to discuss controversial issues with reasons. Fundamentally, debate and argumentation are built upon disagreement and therefore some degree of

confrontation and competitiveness is an essential feature of debate in the western culture.

Western-style debate is usually competitive and can be quite formal. In Thailand, however, 'Lam-Tad' is a prominent debate-like performance that is popular within the culture. Lam-Tad is a form of a humorous performance in which a female and a male team sing improvised rhymes to flirt and challenge each other. It is clear that Thais view debate as an entertaining exchange and therefore, an overly oppositional or aggressive configuration may not be compatible with the social and communicative practices within Thai culture. As reported in Section 6.2.2, the preferences of twenty participants for arguing against familiar peers reflected their fear of embarrassing unfamiliar interlocutors and themselves. The Thai culture emphasises collectivism, deference to a hierarchical structure, good interpersonal relations and the maintenance of harmony. The personality traits of Thai students have been shaped by this culture (Mortlock, no date; Hofstede, 1980). For Thai people, confrontation is innately associated with aggressiveness and disrespect, especially when a younger person argues with an elder. Indeed, Thai students are taught to be humble in front of teachers in order to show respect. Challenging teachers can be viewed in the Thai culture as inappropriate behaviour and therefore, they tend to be accustomed to their role in classrooms as passive recipients of information. These cultural aspects and practices shape Thai students' methods and styles of communication, which tends towards indirectness and compliance. The data from this research strongly suggests that many Thai students perceived argumentation as an antagonistic discourse which may result in division and discord. Section 6.2.2 showed that twenty participants, or 48%, were less anxious in arguing against preferred or acquainted partners. Within this group, the perceptions of four participants clearly regarded making refutation as tense and confrontation. They reported that they felt reluctant to challenge and refute the opinions of unacquainted interlocutors, or unfamiliar peers, because they were worried about making their interlocutors feel upset and inferior.

The concepts and practices associated with Western-style argumentation and debate have not yet been widely implemented or accepted within Thai society. Therefore,

from this, I derive my first principle: **Teachers should carefully consider the origin and philosophy associated with argumentation and the sociocultural factors which shape the Thai students' worldviews and actions in EFL classrooms to generate a better understanding about what argumentation forms or styles will be appropriate for the targeted students.**

Principle 2: Confrontational debate in an EFL setting in Thailand evokes strong emotions amongst the participants.

The teaching of argumentation skills has tended to focus on logical thinking and reasoning and indeed a number of research studies acknowledge that debate is an effective tool for teaching thinking and reasoning skills. However, very little literature in this area highlights how debate can be an emotional activity. My research strongly suggests that at least within the Thai culture debate integrates various aspects of cognition, reasoning, communication and emotionality. In particular, it is difficult to overstate the importance of emotion in the debate task. Vygotskian theory notes that cognition is inseparable from emotions, which transition from the external to the internal and play a role in one's actions (Mesquita, 2012). It is clear that the debate task brings about significant emotions in some Thai students, which influences their processes of thinking and any meditated actions. It can be conjectured from the research findings, as presented in Section 6.2, that debate influences many participants' emotions, ranging from a feeling of motivation to frustration and fear. Initially, a climate of openness before and during the debate task can motivate the reluctant participants who are new to argumentation to actively engage in the task and be open to risk-taking and questioning. Although the findings indicated that twenty-two participants were concerned about their engagement at various states during debate, there were some who were intellectual risk-takers and viewed the activities meaningful despite the provided conditions of the activities (see Section 6.2.1). This climate may also allow some participants to take on different perspectives with regard to certain topics or issues. The participants' recognition of having learned something new and challenging in debate can also lead to feelings of being empowered. Further, this study (see Sections 6.2.3 and 6.3.1) evidenced that a task activity, such as a debate motion,

often impacted the feelings of the participants and determined their motivation and engagement in argumentation. The study also demonstrated that some participants have difficulties with so-called 'perspective-taking'. To explain, the participants who had strong feelings about the debate motion tended to have the greater potential to have a fixed idea about the motion and, to a lesser degree, acknowledge and take into account the other side of argument. This too echoes Vygotsky's framing; these students' thinking in argumentation is woven from a combination of reasoning and feelings.

Other aspects and requirements of the debate task can cause negative emotions in students and affect their actions in the task. For example, the competitive characteristic of debate can negatively impact the emotions in some students who are, particularly, new to debate and unfamiliar with each other. The research findings examined in Section 6.2.1 indicated that twenty-six students were anxious about losing face due to their own weak performance or making other interlocutors upset or humiliated in argumentation. Vygotsky (1987) noted that emotions are socially constructed, and it can be readily understood that the students' emotions have been shaped by historical, cultural and institutional contexts. That around fourteen participants had relatively little exposure to the production of oral English language, particularly, in spontaneous situations and argumentation (see Sections 7.2 and 7.3), resulted in a doubt that they would be able to master debate. It is probable that some students' previous experiences in EFL classroom discussions generated negative feelings that led to their nervousness about making mistakes during debate and being judged in front of unfamiliar peers.

Emotions have been valued differently in different cultures. According to Boss (2015), emotion has been traditionally regarded as a culprit for poor reasoning in western culture. In contrast, the traditional philosophies in some eastern culture emphasise the positive impact of emotions in critical thinking. For example, the traditional philosophy of Confucianism focuses on the cultivation of relationships and emotions (e.g. loyalty and compassions) as the key to the good life. Likewise, several traditional African philosophies take into account the impact of historical and personal experiences in critical thinking. In Buddhism, empathy and love for all living beings is

the foundation of critical thinking as well as achieving the good life. In this regard, the teaching of thinking and reasoning and the expression of opinions have been practiced differently in each country according to its philosophy and culture. We might want to start from a different place then in teaching argumentation - perhaps incorporating the Buddhist perspective, which has a strong influence in Thai culture, into argumentation in the EFL classroom. This might enable a new attention to balancing between reasoning and emotions. That is, the development of healthy emotions such as empathy, happiness and caring may promote some positive emotional effects, such as an open-mindedness to others' perspectives, motivation, positive thinking and flexibility. The development of these emotional capacities has the potential to have a positive effect on the way the students perceive and express emotions during argumentation.

As previously discussed, the debate and argumentation tasks evoked what could be termed at debilitating anxiety in some participants. However, the tasks also appeared to induce facilitating anxiety and other positive emotions in some students. In this regard, my second principle is that: **Emphasising the structure and legitimacy of an argument in order to win an argument is likely to be inadequate for fostering argumentation skills in the Thai context. Attention should also be paid to developing students' abilities to understand and manage their emotions, especially empathy which cultivates being open-minded to others' opinions.**

Principle 3: Debate in an EFL setting in Thailand requires an open and positive atmosphere

An environment of openness is crucial for creating dialogue in an EFL communication classroom which incorporates argumentation or debate as a learning activity. Here, I define 'openness' after Wegerif (2013) as respect for differences and being open to questioning from other perspectives. This chimes also with Panofsky (2003), who argues that mutual respect and trust are fundamental for constructive dialogue within a ZPD. Indeed, Wegerif conceptualises the ZPD as precisely the dialogic space in which teachers and children share their perspectives in order to view matters from each other's worldviews. Wegerif emphasises that dialogue should be bi-directional where

the interlocutors share meanings in dialogue in an open environment. Moon's (2008) work also supports setting a classroom to becomes a place for risk-taking and providing an opportunity to explore ideas rather than simply transferring knowledge.

As widely recognised in other research studies, openness in a classroom can create dialogue which encourages students to think about an issue from various perspectives, freely address their thoughts and question other people's conclusions. Although I realised the significance of how an openness in dialogue contributes to an effective ZPD, I also had to consider how a teacher's control in a classroom as necessary to ensure that the task objectives would be achieved. Teacher-student dialogue during classroom teaching is necessary for exposing students who have experienced passive learning environment and never engaged in any argumentation task to the concept of openness in dialogue.

The research findings discussed in Section 7.4.1 confirmed the importance of open-minded and supportive teachers in dialogue and the value of the teacher's role in creating a positive atmosphere when implementing argumentative discourse in order to familiarise such group of students to this kind of learning atmosphere. Strong criticism from the teachers and an unwillingness to be open has the potential to reduce the students' abilities to withstand and overcome negative emotions. Seven students reported the existence of what could be construed as harmful power relations between the teachers and the students in the whole-class discussions they had experienced in an EFL classroom. The evidence highlights the impact of the teacher's reactions on the emotions of the students during classroom discussions. Negative criticism, in particular, was seen to have a profound and unhelpful impact.

Engaging those students in challenging others' assertions and being open to being questioned by others encourages them to think of issues from different perspectives. Absolutist views and a refusal to acknowledge the validity of other perspectives are not conducive to fostering thinking skills. The research results discussed in Sections 5.4.3 and 6.3.1 confirmed that the students' background knowledge and experience had a significant impact on their capacity to engage in challenging other's arguments. However, the teacher-student dialogue, which is intended to create an open

environment for thinking, helps to shift students' perceptions from viewing an issue from the narrow prism of their background knowledge and experience to being open to other possibilities about the issue.

The insights from the students confirmed the importance of teachers in creating an atmosphere conducive for learning in the EFL classroom. My third principle is therefore that: A **classroom atmosphere should be fostered by the teachers to make students feel positive about multiple perspectives during argumentation and tolerant about challenging other interlocutors and being challenged.**

Principle 4: Adequate scaffolding exposure are necessary for proper internalisation of argument structure.

The findings of this research indicated that the provision of just the knowledge input through modelling the argument pattern and a mini exercise to reinforce the knowledge of argument structure was inadequate to promote the acquisition of the knowledge. This issue was identified from the non-application of the knowledge of argument patterns into all structures in debate. Section 5.8.4 reported how many students successfully applied the argument patterns they had internalised from the preceding scaffolding to constructing arguments in the first two sessions – proposition and opposition. However, the evidence showed that the refutation sessions and, particularly, the rebuttal sessions were highly problematic for the students. Thirty-two (out of thirty-eight) and thirty of the participants did not successfully apply the knowledge when making rebuttals and refutation, respectively.

It is important to take into account an assumption in associated with the absence of argument pattern in all structures of debate. The findings of this research indicated a problematic issue in applying the concepts of ZPD and scaffolding to understand why such knowledge might not necessarily transfer into intramental functioning. When modelling the argument patterns, one would anticipate certain characteristics of the mental process to operate. It is also possible that some participants may have internalised the knowledge of argument patterns in certain situations. In addition,

some participants may not be able to immediately apply the knowledge, particularly when it was presented in one specific debate structure, to other structures in debate.

My view is that providing the concept of argumentation and its structure alone could not yield anticipated learning outcomes. Miller's (2011) studies address how Wertsch criticised the conceptual difficulties he encountered in the application of the Vygotskian model of the ZPD in his examples of learning-teaching situations. Wertsch argues that the teacher's instructions are not always effective and learning does not always occur. He also notes that teacher-student communication about a subject matter is, of course, a necessary feature of the teaching process, but it cannot necessarily be considered as a means of acquisition. From this, I argue that inadequate scaffolding exercises may be less likely to encourage an application of knowledge. All debate structures require active processing (i.e. encoding and storage in working memory) and retrieving information, including a knowledge of argument patterns. In particular, making a rebuttal and a refutation requires a speaker's ability to call upon background knowledge and immediately retrieve information delivered by an opposite speaker. On reflection, that the participants engaged in only one mini task before dealing with debate and perhaps this exposure was insufficient for effectively promoting internalisation. Prior to having them perform debate, it is necessary to, step-by-step, engage the participants in a great number of mini scaffolding exercises, starting from constructing sound arguments to making refutation and rebuttals. The wider applicability of the knowledge of argument patterns to all structures of debate would be promoted through greater scaffolding and recursive exercises

With regard to the issue of non-application of the knowledge of argument patterns into all structures in debate, my forth principle is therefore that: **Teachers should be cautious that introducing and modelling the argument pattern alone might not lead to proper internalisation of the knowledge. To effectively promote the process of internalisation of the argument structure, it is important to provide students with an adequate exposure to scaffolding exercises.**

Principle 5: Confrontational debate in an EFL setting in Thailand requires familiarity between interlocutors

In the EFL setting in Thailand, many participants who are unexperienced in the debating format appeared to require a familiarity between the interlocutors to perform. As indicated in Section 8.2, the data confirmed that during the tasks many students were anxious about losing face in front of unfamiliar peers, or of causing an unfamiliar peer to lose face in front of them. The research results confirmed that the nature and quality of friendship impacted the emotions of the participants in debate. A sense of relatedness resulted in their willingness to participate in debate and affected the way they mediated their performance. Argumentation is often perceived as having a negative effect on the relationship between the participants (Schwarz and Baker, 2017). The findings in my research showed that debate was perceived amongst some Thai students as having a negative impact on the relationship between interlocutors. Some students perceived making refutation, particularly, against unacquainted interlocutors, as threatening. Many participants preferred to confront and challenge friends whom they were more familiar with, rather than unacquainted peers. This helped to diminish their uncomfortable feelings and nullify the tense atmosphere. My findings here replicated those from Nussbaum and Bendixen's (2003) study which address that the desire to maintain warm interpersonal relations led to avoidance in confrontation. The participants' preferences for familiar partners in dyadic debate indicated a culture where they wished to avoid any embarrassment and threats to the unacquainted or unfamiliar interlocutors. This personality trait appears to be shaped by Thai culture, which emphasises good interpersonal relations and maintaining harmony rather than competition and individualism (Hofstede, 1980; Mortlock, no date). In addition, allowing the students to select their own debate partners or team members helps to create a supportive atmosphere. Gray, Culpepper and Welsh (2012) contend that adolescent friends provide support, reassurance and encouragement during times of uncertainty. The authors also state that adolescents engage in social comparisons for many reasons, and of course, this includes academic achievement. It is understandable that students would gauge their English language abilities against their interlocutors and this social comparison consequently caused anxiety in the participants in this

research. Therefore, the students should be allowed to work in an environment which matches or closely matches their peer or partner preferences to make them feel more motivated and relaxed. In the study, it was observed that a small cohort of participants working with familiar peers created a supportive and secure learning atmosphere in which they were encouraged to fully perform in accordance with their actual capacities. It also helped to reduce anxiety over any potential conflicts which may happen during and after an argumentative task.

The fifth principle for creating a pedagogical model which fosters argumentation skills for an English EFL classroom at a Thai university surfaces from these observations around the importance of peer familiarity. **For dyadic argumentation, students should be allowed to work in an environment which matches or closely matches their peer or partner preferences to make them feel less anxious.**

Principle 6: Making the argumentative tasks engaging and 'Sanook' will encourage effective debate

Here, my principles become more speculative – while still based on my observations of what happened in the research study and the students reflections on their classroom experiences. When creating an argumentative task for an EFL speaking classroom, teachers might consider making the classroom atmosphere for the task Sanook, using a range of artefacts and strategies. The Thai word, Sanook, which is translated to fun in English has a deep-seated psychological meaning to everyday life of Thai people. It applies to all circumstances of Thais, including work, because Thais believe that everything in life should at least try to be fun (Kislenko, 2004).

One of the ways a task can be made more Sanook for Thai students is through the selection of an appropriate topic. A topic should not only be personally relevant to the students' background knowledge and experience but also make argumentation entertaining to help facilitate their engagement and performance during debate. From the findings, eleven participants confirmed that passion for a topic played a part in their affective emotions and task engagement and in debate. Furthermore, the evidence showed that some of the students struggled with handling a topic which was related to

the aspect of using social media to empower political movements. This is because this group had no experience and apparently no interest in politics and they viewed it irrelevant to their daily life and experiences. It is therefore clear that the participants were wary of and perceived a political issue as challenging. Although the topic about the impact of social media applications may appear relevant to the participants' daily life, a politically-related aspect reflected in the topic might not be able to elicit the participants' engagement for argumentation.

In addition, the demographic data of the current research showed that the participants who represented Thai EFL students at the local context lacked an exposure to engaging in argumentative tasks in English and they were perceived as novices. For instance, having those beginners whose area of study is language and literature argue about topics which require specific knowledge such as politics or economics requires a significant effort and is likely to provoke anxiety in argumentation. Considering the levels of the targeted students' experiences of argumentation and their cultural contexts, the followings are examples of entertaining topics which would be fun and interesting to argue about:

- The teenage years are exhausting;
- Being good at sports is better than good at studying;
- Being single is better than being in a relationship.

Students should also be encouraged to toss out ideas and come to a decision on a topic they want to debate. For example, if they suggest the theme of coffee drinking, they should be encouraged to take part in the shaping of the topic. For example, as a facilitator, the teacher should assist them to frame the topic 'Starbucks is the best café in Chiang Mai' to be clear and appealing to debate. As selection of topics is crucial because they should be able to engage the students, I derive the sixth principle: **Teachers should consider how the topic matter would impact the anxiety and engagement of the students and make it Sanook and engaging.**

Principle 7: Scaffolding in rhetoric argumentation should be provided.

Various aspects of Vygotsky's theories were used in this work, including scaffolding, internalisation and ZPD. As indicated earlier, the majority of participants struggled with the so-called secondary Toulmin elements, such as rebuttals and refutations after making the initial primary argument during debate. This is also consistent with the literature in the science context (e.g. Jiménez-Aleixandre, Rodriguez and Duschl, 2000; Erduran, Simon and Osborne, 2004). That is, L2 learners have difficulties with these secondary Toulmin activities that are associated with higher mental functions.

One aspect of my research that may have been under-examined at the outset was the importance of rhetoric in debate. For example, Ko (2015) has confirmed the value of rhetoric in public policy debate issues. This was, perhaps understandable as most of the literature in the area of L2 learning and argumentation focuses on argumentative writing and text (e.g. Qin and Karabacak, 2010; Stapleton and Wu, 2015). Regardless, in any type of debate format the interlocutor needs to be persuasive. The conventional notion holds that rhetoric is key to convince the other interlocutors of the argument and that this may require debunking widely held perspectives or beliefs. And these rhetorical skills are particularly key during rebuttal and refutation arguments, where the speech is unscripted and unrehearsed.

Aristotle identified three aspects that were important for rhetoric and the art of persuasion: ethos, logos and pathos. From a debating format point of view, the first is focused on the interlocutor, the second on the argument itself and the third on the opposing participants in the debate. Combined, these aspects can actuate effective persuasion in a debating environment.

Ethos relates to the character of the speaker, and in particular her trustworthiness and authority. An interlocutor's credibility can be strengthened by using rhetorical techniques such as similitude and deference. Similitude refers to a rhetorical device whereby the interlocutor creates an identicalness between herself and the opposing team and audience. This can be done by using pronouns such as 'us' and 'we' to foster a sense of a common identity. In turn, this cohesion helps to encourage a common

sense of purpose for everybody within the debating environment. Deference is a way for the interlocutor to signal respect for the opposing side and the audience. It also displays a personal humility. The interlocutor can demonstrate deference by using expressions such as 'in my opinion', or 'I understand that the opposition believes'. Such expressions are less aggressive in their tone and suggest a respect for the opposing interlocutors. This behaviour strengthens the opinion of the onlookers for the speaker and is indicative of a respect for others. As we have observed in the research results many participants were anxious before and during debate and some of this anxiety was due to concerns over losing face personally or causing a loss of face to another. Thai society is highly deferential, and indeed the behaviour of many of the elected members of the parliamentary House of Commons, with the mock refrain of 'my learned friend' would not be tolerated. For a Thai context, it is important to engender a deference for the opposing team and the audience using rhetorical techniques. Being aggressive or rude to an opponent is highly unlikely to garner respect and authority in a Thai context.

Logos is the rhetorical device that emphasises the logic and clarity of the argument being presented. For example, how well do the claims and warrants relate to the evidence? Are there errors in the speaker's reasoning, such as a logical fallacy? Most importantly, logos is only followed when the audience can follow the logic of the argument of the interlocutor. A rhetorical technique, known as signposting, can help the audience and debate participants to follow the argument of the interlocutor. Signposts can indicate the structure of the argument to come, where the interlocutor is in the argument at the moment and what the audience and participants can expect. The technique can be executed using words (e.g. specifically, next, however, for example) during debate. Logos is very important for L2 learners as it indicates higher mental functions and an ordered approach to the presentation of an argument.

Finally, pathos is the device that is most closely associated with rhetorical speech. Using pathos, the speaker should aim to trigger specific emotions to persuade the audience of the strength of their argument. For example, the speakers might indicate the worthiness and importance of their arguments. Van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2000,

p. 296) refer to "an interest in the use of effective persuasion techniques". The importance of emotions has been documented in this research, however in that case they were not related to rhetorical persuasion. Rather, they were associated with facilitating and debilitating anxieties.

I approached argumentation as a mediational tool of developing critical thinking in EFL students. Considering what actually happened in the participants' mediated actions in debate, however, it is clear that the teaching of argumentation is not solely central to a form of thinking and how an argument is delivered. The process of argumentation also involves emotions, relations and persuasion. Therefore, the teaching of argumentation should also focus on a form of relating, respecting and persuading people – features associated with rhetoric argumentation.

The difficulties the participants experienced with secondary Toulmin elements highlighted the importance of understanding and developing useful rhetoric skills to help foster respect and equality during debate. These secondary Toulmin elements are, in particular, associated with fostering higher mental functions. From all of this, I derive the seventh principle: **Scaffolding for rhetoric skills, such as signposting, similitude and deference, should be included to improve the rebuttal and refutation capacities of the students, along with promoting respect and humility.**

In summary, from the outputs of this research study, I argue that the aforementioned principles might act as a robust foundation for the future development of appropriate learning environments and mediational tools to explicitly teach argumentation in an English oral communication classroom at a university in Thailand or other contexts which have similar historical, cultural and institutional constraints.

The rest of the chapter discusses how this research contributes to teaching practices and the research study in this area. There follows some conceptual and technical limitations of this research which also suggest what avenues for future research could be explored. The last section elaborates my story as a researcher as well as an EFL teacher. It commences with how I initially devised this research study and how this has

changed and what I have learned over the course of this research study. I also consider what have been the most important insights for me in as a teacher and a researcher.

8.3 How has this research contributed to the existing literature?

My study makes three main contributions to the field. At the beginning, the development of a richer understanding of the sociocultural conditions that might impede or inform students confidence in participating in argumentation. Secondly, the development of a mediational tool to support teachers to practice argumentation with students in the classroom. Finally, the development of a set of principles to inform future teacher-led design of argumentation for the EFL classroom in Thailand. I elaborate below:

The first contribution of this study is a rich data set offering novel and robust insights into the social and cultural context of EFL university students in Thailand and the teaching and learning practices that are likely to support learning of critical thinking through argumentation. Based on in-depth interviews and practical activities with forty-two students in total, I am able to identify that implementing an unmodified debate in the EFL classroom at a Thai university provoked feelings of anxiety for many participants. In addition, I am able to identify some of the causes of these anxieties and propose future trajectories to address these in the future design of argumentation and critical thinking tasks in the EFL classroom in Thailand.

To date, a number of research studies have reported the benefits of incorporating in-class debate in both L1 and L2 settings (e.g. Kennedy, 2009; Akerman and Neale, 2011; Healey, 2012; Brown, Bown and Egget, 2014; Aclan and Aziz, 2015; Želježič, 2017; Iman, 2017; Jost, 2018). (Healey, 2012; Iman, 2017). Where these studies found that structured debate formats are an effective pedagogical method for developing critical thinking, oral communicative competence and understanding of subject content. In contrast, I found that implementing the Western-style debate in the EFL classroom at a Thai university caused feelings of anxiety for many participants which lead to an encumbered and tense atmosphere. In turn, this resulted in hindered learning. I traced

how the students' sociocultural background was integral to driving this anxiety and some of the key features of this background that are important in this process.

The research has also led to the design of a pedagogical tool for scaffolding argumentation in an English oral communication classroom at a Thai university. This is the second contribution of the research. Although there had been some research prior to this on the integration of in-class debate in an EFL classroom, those studies tend to investigate the effectiveness of debate in enhancing learners' broad critical thinking skills or English communication skills (e.g. Aclan and Aziz, 2015; Iman, 2017; Jost, 2018). Interestingly, how to design and develop the mediational tools to foster argumentation skills in the Thai context and other similar contexts has not been widely explored. Despite providing the scaffolding tasks, the testing results indicated the difficulties of many participants in spontaneous speech, such as rebuttal and refutation. There were also challenges for some participants in perceiving the perspective of the opposing team due to embedded belief systems. Those findings suggested the need to improve the existing scaffolding model in order to develop the students' willingness to embrace different views and build up their skills in opposing others' views without reacting defensively.

Finally, the research has also proposed a set of principles for teaching argumentation in an EFL classroom at a Thai university. These principles make a contribution not only to research, but to teaching in the local context and have the potential to be applied in other EFL where argumentative discourse like debate is an unfamiliar social and communication practice. These principles may be regarded as a useful contribution, then, both to research and to teaching.

8.4 **Research limitations**

As with all research, this study has some conceptual and technical limitations. Initially, my initial intention as a teacher-researcher was to find ways of teaching critical thinking in the EFL oral communication classroom. In researching the literature and scope of the project, the wide range of definitions, dispositions and skills associated with critical thinking made its conceptualisation problematical. Given the complexity

and diversity of critical thinking, I made the decision to focus on a pedagogic technique that was familiar to me – and which I knew had generated some success already with the students I had worked with – namely, debate and argumentation. Given the insights that I now have into students cultural and social background and the new confidence I have as a Thai researcher, I might, starting the project today – begin from a different place. For example, from a more confident inquiry into the already–existing critical thinking tools in Thailand and in Thai culture. The limitations of starting from a Western-oriented position, however, only became clear over the course of the study.

The research, of course, has some technical limitations due to the time and budget constraints. Iterative cycles of testing and refinement of the interventions were carried out with different participant groups (see Section 4.2.6.3) and outside live classrooms – which was less than ideal for the typical procedures in DBR. The first iteration was carried out outside the research site in Thailand and with two volunteers who were not the target students. This was for practical reasons, because the interventions needed to be developed prior to my arrival in Thailand so that they were ready to be tested with the targeted participants. For the same reasons, the second iteration was undertaken with four target students randomly picked from the forty-two volunteers at the research site rather than with the whole cohort. To collect the data from thirty-eight participants at this stage would have required the ten weeks that the final study took. On reflection, carrying out the second and third iterations with the same group of the participants would have taken a longer time, required more budget, and in particular, a much greater time commitment from the students than was possible within the constraints of this study.

I maintain, however, that the first two iterations provided key insights which were important for the refinement of the interventions for the third iteration. Of course, carrying out three iterative cycles with the same group of the targeted participants might have provided richer results. In addition, it could be argued that a more prolonged study with the same group of participants would have allowed me to more deeply understand the students' experiences. Just at the point where I had begun to

make some really novel insights – in particular the beginnings of ideas of how I might incorporate Thai cultural practices – I had already reached the limits of my available time and resources. An additional iteration would have allowed me to observe how effective the principles developed above were in practice and to potentially develop more culturally specific tools for further implementation in an EFL classroom in a local context. This must be saved for my practice as a teacher.

The final technical limitation pertains to the process of data collection. According to a DBR model, the first phase is often concerned with working in close collaboration with practitioners in a local context in order to understand the practical situation. However, interviews with some other EFL teachers and students at the local context was not carried out prior to the stage of developing the interventions. Rather, I utilised my teaching experience in the local context to analyse the practical situation. Working in collaboration with my co-workers and students might have been equally beneficial in terms of helping reconfirm my analysis of what situations the teachers and students were encountering in the EFL classroom.

None of these limitations, however, undermines the validity of the insights that I have derived into these Thai students' sociocultural contexts, experiences of oral English language learning and expectations and emotions around the learning of argumentation in the EFL classroom.

8.5 **Suggestions for future research**

Taking into account of the strengths and limitations of this research, there are a number of interesting aspects emerging from this study that warrant further exploration.

First, it is now very clear to me that there should be further research which investigates the role of the sociocultural contexts that impact thinking skills within Thai culture. The results of this research indicated that there are significant constraints of Thai culture that impact the educational contexts and ecosystem with which students interact in the EFL classroom. These constraints could be useful for me to build upon because they shape not only the expectations of the students for learning opportunity

to express their thoughts, but also their mediated actions in debate. A more detailed study of the sociocultural features and impacts of already existing critical thinking practices and classroom cultures might provide some insightful, contextual background which would have implications for designing mediational tools to develop argumentation skills in Thai EFL students. In turn, this would contribute to the fostering of thinking skills.

Secondly, any future research should explore the development of less confrontational modes of debate and argumentation with the Thai EFL undergraduates. This suggestion emerges from the findings in this research regarding some of the characteristics and conditions of debate which contributed to a tense atmosphere and anxiety for many of the participants. In particular, there are two specific avenues that may be worth exploring that build upon the potential for more playful debate.

Gamifying debate

There is a rich and diverse history of traditional sports, games and performances in Thailand. It is postulated that part of the purpose for such a rich milieu of games was to increase harmony and community amongst generations and to create fun rather than a sense of victory (Department of Physical Education, 2014). One such game, Dern Ka La, or Coconut-shell Shoes, utilises strings attached to coconut shells. The player stands on coconut shells attached to strings as if they are shoes and start moving on them as quickly as they can. The fastest player who can move the wins the game. Monsonpa, or Mon hides a cloth, is a popular guessing game for larger groups of children. With this game, the players must guess if the cloth has been placed behind them. If it has, they have to quickly pick it up and chase their opponent, catching them before they make it back to an empty seat. Might we draw on this to develop debate practices in the classroom?

The creative disposition and responsiveness of Thai culture towards games actually prompted one researcher to investigate game-enhanced simulation as an approach to experiential learning in Business English in a private Thai university (Punyalert, 2017). The researcher claimed that a game-enhanced simulation specifically based and

designed around the video game RollerCoaster Tycoon 3 Platinum was successful "as an experiential space for L2 learners to experience the dynamic and real business contexts of language use" (Punyalert, 2017, p. 11). Much more research in this area might be developed.

One future direction for research might involve gamifying debate for teaching argumentation in the Thai context. In this regard, there could be another research direction which focuses on investigating various gamifying strategies for debate and argumentation. One might imagine a study investigating how students' engagement in gamified debate mediates their use of argumentation skills.

Role-play debate and switch-side debate

Another interesting area to explore relates to how students might be engaged in role-play debate and switching sides during debate. A major challenge for a number of the Thai students during the debate was the ability to perceive the opposing side's perspective. The research findings marked the impact of the students' background knowledge on the way they agreed or disagreed with certain arguments. Many participants were unable to refute the opposite speakers' arguments with which they totally agreed. In this regard, the investigation of students' engagement in role-play debate or switch-side debate would provide insightful findings which would have implications for the design of mediational tools to teach argumentation.

A number of other researchers (Roy and Macchiette, 2005; Snider and Schnurer, 2006; Kenedy, 2009; Yang and Rusli, 2012; Wade, 2016) have emphasised how activities such as role-play debates, along with similar undertakings, such as 'switch-side debating', allows for significant so-called 'perspective-taking'. Perspective taking has also been identified as one of the core aspects of a critical thinking disposition, as measured in Facione's open-mindedness scale (2000). Wade (2016) explains role-play debate:

> …students go beyond two-sided arguments and consider a range of possible perspectives towards an issue by adopting the standpoints and perspectives of diverse stakeholders engaging a public issue…and thus encourage students to gather information and take on the perspectives of various participants…(Wade, 2016, p. 102)

Switch-side debating occurs when the participants argue both for and against a given topic. Harrigan (2008) argues about the benefits of this activity:

> Switching sides is a method that is integral to the success of debate as a deliberative and reflexive activity. No other component process than switch side debate contributes more greatly to the cultivation of a healthy ethic of tolerance and pluralism, generates the reasoned reflection necessary for critical thinking, or instills responsible and critical skepticism toward dominant systems of belief (Harrigan, 2008, p. 2)

Taking into account the difficulties that the students experienced in perspective-taking, a future investigation might focus on how to create a pedagogical model which uses techniques such as role-play and switch-side debating to nurture students' capacities to comprehend the stance of the opposition.

Impact of personality traits on actions in argumentation

A final possible area of future research could focus on certain personality traits of Thai students and their impact on mediated actions in argumentation. For example, it could be a comparative study to investigate the role the characteristics and traits of the students' play in their performances and perceptions in argumentation. This research direction is prompted from the evidence that there were twenty-two students who were apprehensive and lacked of self-confidence prior and during debate while twenty students who were determined to participate in debate despite their concern over the debate task. The assumption might be that the perceptions about debate of extroverted students who appeared to embrace risk in a new learning experience might differ from introverted students who appeared to be concerned about losing face in performing the debate. It would also be interesting to determine whether the characteristics of the argumentation task would benefit a specific group more than others.

As I have described in Section 6.2, Vygotsky's writings on the relationship between affect and intellect or thought have, hitherto, remained relatively unexplored. When he died Vygotsky was working on a manuscript, 'The Teaching about Emotions: Historical-Psychological Studies', that focused on a historical analysis of the role of affect on learning. This manuscript only became available in English in recent years.

Mahn and John-Steiner (2002) highlighted the importance of the ZPD in Vygotsky's theory for assisting students in building on their prior experiences and building confidence for learning a L2. In particular, their publication outlined a theoretical framework for teachers and students in L2 learning to harness affective factors and bring about sustained confidence. The publication, entitled 'The Gift of Confidence: A Vygotskian View of Emotions', also recognised the importance of fostering L2 students' capacities to take calculated risks in learning. In particular the authors examined the interplay between the ZPD, the relationship between word meaning and sense, and the Vygotskyian concept known as 'perezhivanie', described by the authors as the "ways in which the participants perceive, experience, and process the emotional aspects of social interaction" (Mahn and John-Steiner, 2002, p. 49). The authors indicated:

> By expanding the scope of the examination of the ZPD to include affective variable we can both amplify its dynamic character and deepen understanding of this Vygotskian concept. This approach reveals the ZPD as a complex whole, a system of systems in which the interrelated and interdependent elements include the participants, artefacts and environmental/context, and the participants' experience of their interactions within it. In addition, we suggest that the complementarity that exists between these elements play a central role in the construction of the ZPD. When a breach in this complementarity occurs because the cognitive demands are too far beyond the learner's ability or because negative affective factors such as fear or anxiety are present, the zone in which effective teaching/learning occurs is diminished. (Mahn and John-Steiner, 2002, p. 49)

There can be no doubt that Mahn and John-Steiner's publication has tremendous relevance for this study. Specifically, the importance they attach to the concept of perezhivanie, which correlates to a 'lived or emotional experience' rhymes with this research. The authors indicate that perezhivanie is a description for 'affective processes' by which interactions within the ZPD are perceived, adopted and characterised by individuals participants. Undoubtedly, this work represents a significant and untapped area for research in Thai EFL classrooms.

8.6 **Some changes in my own understanding and position**

My decision to employ a Western-style conventional debate and to teach argumentation skills as a means of developing critical thinking, as reported in other studies conducted in L1 contexts, was influenced by what could be characterised as a strongly respectful attitude within Thailand towards Western civilisation and culture. While not colonised directly, Siam (former name of Thailand) was subordinated to Western influences in what Jackson (2004) has referred to as 'semi-coloniality'. Western culture and technology strongly influenced how Siam developed and the modernisation of the country in several aspects, including education, politics and government, military and lifestyle. King Chulalongkorn (r. 1865-1910) and other Siamese aristocrats visited various European countries in the 19th century and returned with a vision to bring the Siam kingdom to a Western-style standard of civilisation. In addition, in the era of the Thai Cultural Revolution (1939 – 1942), in which a new nationalism was prioritised to modernise the country, some traditional practices which were seen as backwards were abolished. Indeed, a set of cultural mandates were initiated as a result of entering World War II. For example, Mandate No. 10 stated that people should not appear in public places without wearing appropriate dress. The wearing of only underpants or wraparound cloth was forbidden. Rather, Thai people were required to wear Western-style attire or sophisticated traditional-style attire. The government also mandated the wearing of hats when appearing in public places. The poster in Figure 8-1 demonstrates the prohibited dress forms on the left and the appropriate dress forms on the right. Such pro-Western views are still deeply embedded within Thai society. There is no doubt that the culture-boundedness of my environment to Western culture, including forms of argumentation and debate, to a certain degree, influenced my perspective that conventional debate would be successful at fostering some thinking skills in a Thai EFL classroom.

My experience during this research and the findings gradually compelled me to reflect upon, and evaluate the conventional debate format in a broader context. The conventional debate format is perceived as a paradigm of western knowledge. It is derived from, and reflects, Western thinking which emphasises the notions of, for

instance, individualism, self-expression, formal and instrumental rationality, and reflexivity (Atkinson, 1997; Santos, 2017). Upon reflection, I put too much faith in the adoption of the Western debate format and the Eurocentric way of processing ideas in the Thai EFL classroom. In 'Decolonising the University: The Challenge of Deep Cognitive Justice', Santos (2017) Santos emphasises the need for creating a distance in relation to the Eurocentric tradition. The author states:

> Ultimately, keeping a distance vis-à-vis the Eurocentric tradition amounts to being aware of the fact that the diversity of world experience is inexhaustible and therefore cannot be accounted for by any single general theory. (Santos, 2017, p. 149).

Figure 8-1 Poster demonstrating prohibited dress on the left and appropriate dress on the right

While the pervasive and dominant nature of Western knowledge in Thailand influenced my acceptance of analysing the argument structure and utilising a debate format, this resulted in in me not fully embracing a more localised and tailored approach to developing argumentation skills in Thai EFL students. Above all, my analysis of the participating students' mediated actions, allowed me to understand the issues around the use of debate in an EFL setting in Thailand. Debate is a social

practice in the Western world while debating in L2 setting involves foreign language and invokes differences in cultural customs or practices. Although the participating students were interest in culturally oriented activities, the research results indicated that the participating students had significant difficulties while performing in the conventional debate format.

On reflections, I now realise that the transposing of a Western-style debate format, albeit with some minor modifications, into a Thai EFL classroom requires a substantive reform of the scaffolding process and debate format. It is possible that there are better ways of teaching argumentation skills that are more in keeping with the Thai culture and values which emphasise compromise and harmony. Johnson, Johnson and Smith' research (2000) indicates that a debate format is relatively flexible for modification. In their study, they transformed a debate format into a 'constructive controversy'. Their format was similar to debate, but it combined cooperative learning and controversy resolving. That is, students work in small groups debating the advantages and disadvantages associated with certain positions of an assigned topic and reflect to write about a solution that is acceptable amongst group members. A further challenge is how to modify a debate format to be able to not only accommodate the sociocultural background of Thai EFL students but also maintain the students' interest in an exposure to argumentation. It is obvious that teachers should not ignore the importance of exposing Thai EFL students to the communication and social practices of the target language culture because we live and participate in a globalised world. However, concomitantly, my research indicates that teachers need to pay attention and concentrate on the significant characteristics of Thai culture and the sensitivities of Thai students as well if we are to develop an approach that is appropriate for the needs of Thai EFL students. Ultimately, turning the absent practice of argumentation in Thai society into a viable condition for argumentation and critical thinking skills in an EFL classroom in Thailand requires the negotiation of cultural differences.

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Appendix 1

English courses for English major undergraduate students

Year 1

Semester 1

001101 Listening and Speaking in English	3 credits
001102 Reading and Writing in English	3 credits
001111 Oral Communication 1	3 credits

Semester 2

001112 Oral Communication 2	3 credits
001118 Paragraph Writing	3 credits

Year 2

Semester 1

001211 Analytical Reading and Summary Writing	3 credits
001230 Introduction to Language	3 credits
001231 English Phonetics	3 credits
001250 Introduction to Literature	3 credits
001281 English Language and Culture	3 credits

Semester 2

001212 Language Consolidation through Translation	3 credits
001218 Essay Writing	3 credits
001234 Introduction to English Phonology and Morphology	3 credits
001314 Presentation Skills in English	3 credits
001352 Reservoir Literature and Reinterpretation	3 credits

Appendix 2

Graduate School of Education
35 Berkeley Square
BS8 1JA
Bristol

17 August 2016

Head of the Department of English
Faculty of Humanities
Chiang Mai University

Dear Asst. Prof. Suwimon Torapicharttrakoon,

I am writing to request for your permission to conduct my research, titled **Teaching Critical Thinking to Thai EFL Students through Argumentation**, at the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Mai University. The proposed study has been validated and approved by a panel of internal examiners at Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol. The objective of this study is to develop the pedagogical techniques that explicitly foster critical thinking that are appropriate to Thai EFL classrooms in higher education. I also wish to explore Thai student's perspectives on their experience in argumentation in an EFL setting. I would like to conduct this research at the Department of English because the study focuses on using argumentation in an EFL context and English-majored undergraduates have, presumably, direct expose to the EFF curriculum.

The research process will involve spending, approximately, four months at the university. I would like to invite students to take part in argumentation, questionnaires, and one-on-one interviews. These will be carried out at the university within office hours, and occasionally between 5 pm and 7 pm during the week. I would like to assure you that I have completed an ethics review of my research at University of Bristol. I would appreciate if you could inform me of any ethical or other concerns regarding this research and the processing and transfer of the data associated with this research.

Please see the attached information sheet which includes a brief overview of my research and the research ethics that are associated with the study. In conclusion, I would be most grateful if you would consider allowing me to carry out my research at the faculty. At this time, I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely Yours,

[redacted]

(Tanyapon Phongphio)
PhD student
Graduate School of Education
University of Bristol

Appendix 3

University of BRISTOL

Information Sheet

My name is Tanyapon Phongphio, a PhD student at the Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol, United Kingdom. I would like to invite you to participate in my research project entitled **Teaching Critical Thinking to Thai EFL Students through Argumentation**. An overview of my research is as follows:

Research Objectives:
To develop the pedagogical techniques that explicitly foster critical thinking that are appropriate to Thai EFL classrooms in higher education

Research Participants:
Third-year undergraduates who are majoring in English as a Foreign Language programme at a university in Thailand

Why You Should Participate:
It is expected that your participation will make significant contribution to the generation of knowledge that allows us to provide valuable insights of what needs to be considered in applying argumentative discussions in EFL speaking course to promote critical thinking. However, you have the choice to give or not to give your consent, and your participation will not involve any grading in any subjects.

Research Methods:
1) Audio recording of observations
2) Paper-and-pencil questionnaires
3) Audio recording of one-on-one interviews

Confidentiality:
Your personal information and answers will be kept confidential and anonymous and will not be distributed in any way. Your answers will not be linked to your name and will only be used for this research study. Pseudonyms

and id numbers that cannot be traced will be used in data storage, transcribing, analysis and report.

How We Use the Data Collected:

The answers you give in this research will not be shared with other teachers or staff of your department. The data will be stored in password protected computers and will be used for the purpose of this research only. It will not be distributed in any way without your prior permission.

Verification of Research:

A panel of internal examiners at Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol has verified this research project.

Information about the Researcher:

If you have any further queries about my research procedures, please contact me through any of the listed means.

Phone: +66 (0) 89 700 6897

E-mail: tp14113@bristol.ac.uk

School address: Graduate School of Education
University of Bristol
Bristol BS8 1JA
UK

Complaint Procedure:

Any complaints can be voiced to my research supervisors.

Dr. Talia Isaacs E-mail: talia.isaacs@bristol.ac.uk

Dr. Helen Woodfield E-mail: helen.woodfield@bristol.ac.uk

University of BRISTOL

รายละอียดโครงการวิจัย

ดิฉัน นางสาวชัญญาภรณ์ ผ่องผิว นักศึกษาระดับปริญญาเอก ศึกษาศาตร์บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยบริสโตล สหราชอาณาจักร ขอเชิญท่านเข้าร่วมโครงการวิจัย เรื่อง **การสอนการคิดอย่างมีวิจารณญาณโดยใช้การอภิปรายโต้แย้งแก่นักศึกษาไทยที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ (Teaching Critical Thinking to Thai EFL Students through Argumentation)** รายละอียดโครงการวิจัยมีดังต่อไปนี้

วัตถุประสงค์

เพื่อพัฒนาเทคนิคการสอนการคิดอย่างมีวิจารณญาณสำหรับการเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศในระดับอุดมศึกษา

ผู้เข้าร่วมโครงการวิจัย

นักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรี วิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ ชั้นปีที่ 3 ของมหาวิทยาลัยในประเทศไทย

เหตุใดท่านจึงควรเข้าร่วมโครงการวิจัยนี้

การเข้าร่วมโครงการวิจัยนี้มีความสำคัญอย่างยิ่งในการสร้างองค์ความรู้อันจะเป็นประโยชน์ต่อการนำการอภิปรายโต้แย้งไปปรับใช้ในการเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อพัฒนาทักษะการพูดและการคิดวิเคราะห์ อย่างไรก็ตาม การเข้าร่วมหรือไม่เข้าร่วมโครงการวิจัยนี้ขึ้นอยู่กับความสมัครใจและความยินยอมของท่าน และไม่มีผลต่อการคิดลำดับขั้นในกระบวนวิชาใดๆ

เครื่องมือสำหรับเก็บข้อมูล

1. การสังเกตุการณ์และการบันทึกเสียง
2. แบบสอบถาม
3. การสัมภาษณ์และการบันทึกเสียง

การเก็บข้อมูลเป็นความลับ

ข้อมูลส่วนตัวของท่าน ข้อมูลจากการสังเกตุการณ์ การตอบแบบสอบถาม และการให้สัมภาษณ์ จะถูกเก็บไว้เป็นความลับและจะถูกตั้งชื่อโดยใช้นามสมมติหรือรหัสซึ่งจะไม่เชื่อมโยงกับชื่อจริงของท่านแต่อย่างใด การจัดเก็บไฟล์ข้อมูลลงในคอมพิวเตอร์ การถอดเทป การวิเคราะห์ และรายงาน

ผล ก็จะใช้นามสมมติหรือรหัสระจำตัวซึ่งจะไม่เชื่อมโยงกับชื่อจริงของท่านเช่นเดียวกัน ข้อมูลจะถูกนำไปใช้เพื่อโครงการวิจัยนี้เท่านั้น จะไม่มีการนำข้อมูลไปใช้ในการอื่นซึ่งนอกเหนือจากโครงการวิจัยนี้

การนำข้อมูลไปใช้

จะไม่มีการนำข้อมูลต่างๆที่ได้จากการเข้าร่วมโครงการวิจัยนี้ของท่านไปเผยแพร่กับคณาจารย์หรือเจ้าหน้าที่ของภาควิชาภาษาอังกฤษ ข้อมูลจะถูกเก็บไว้ในคอมพิวเตอร์ซึ่งต้องมีรหัสผ่านของเจ้าของเครื่อง นอกจากนี้ข้อมูลจะถูกใช้เพื่อวัตถุประสงค์ของโครงการวิจัยเท่านั้น จะไม่มีการนำไปใช้ในการอื่นโดยไม่ผ่านการยินยอมจากท่าน

การรับรองโครงการวิจัย

โครงการวิจัยนี้ได้ผ่านการพิจารณาและรับรองจากคณะกรรมการภายในของศึกษาศาสตร์บัณฑิตวิทยาลัยเป็นที่เรียบร้อยแล้ว

ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับผู้วิจัย

หากท่านมีข้อสงสัยเกี่ยวกับขั้นตอนของโครงการวิจัยนี้ สามารถติดต่อผู้วิจัยได้ตามรายละเอียดด้านล่างนี้

โทรศัพท์: 089 7006897

อีเมล์: tp14113@bristol.ac.uk

การร้องเรียน

หากท่านมีข้อร้องเรียนเกี่ยวกับโครงการวิจัยนี้ สามารถส่งไปที่คณาจารย์ผู้ควบคุมโครงการวิจัยได้ตามรายละเอียดด้านล่างนี้

Dr. Talia Isaacs อีเมล์: talia.isaacs@bristol.ac.uk

Dr. Helen Woodfield อีเมล์: helen.woodfield@bristol.ac.uk

Appendix 4

University of BRISTOL

Consent Form
หนังสือให้ความยินยอม

Teaching Critical Thinking to Thai EFL Students through Argumentation
การสอนการคิดอย่างมีวิจารณญาณโดยใช้การอภิปรายโต้แย้งแก่นักศึกษาไทยที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ

Please check ✓ in ☐ if you agree.
กรุณาใส่เครื่องหมาย ✓ ลงใน ☐ หากท่านเห็นด้วย

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the study and I have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐
   ข้าพเจ้าขอยืนยันว่าได้อ่านและเข้าใจข้อมูลในเอกสารรายละเอียดโครงการวิจัยเรียบร้อยแล้ว และได้มีโอกาสซักถามผู้วิจัยในข้อสงสัยต่างๆแล้ว
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the investigation process at any time, without giving any reasons. ☐
   ข้าพเจ้าเข้าใจว่าการเข้าร่วมโครงการวิจัยนี้เป็นการเข้าร่วมโดยสมัครใจ ข้าพเจ้ามีอิสระในการถอนตัวจากการเก็บข้อมูลได้ทุกเมื่อโดยมิต้องให้เหตุผลใดๆ
3. I understand that the observation and interviews will be recorded on voice recorder for future analysis. ☐
   ข้าพเจ้าเข้าใจว่าจะมีการบันทึกเสียงในระหว่างการสังเกตการณ์และการสัมภาษณ์เพื่อนำข้อมูลไปใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ต่อไป
4. I agree to take part in this research study. ☐
   ข้าพเจ้าตกลงเข้าร่วมโครงการวิจัยนี้

Signature of the Participant ลายเซ็นของผู้เข้าร่วม: _____

Name & Surname ชื่อและนามสกุลของผู้เข้าร่วม: _____

Email อีเมล์: _____ Date วันที่: _____

Signature of the Researcher ลายเซ็นของผู้วิจัย: _____

Name & Surname ชื่อและนามสกุลของผู้วิจัย: __TanyaponPhongphio_____

Email อีเมล์: ___tp14113@bristol.ac.uk_____ Date วันที่: _____

Appendix 5

University of BRISTOL

GSoE Research Ethics Form

Name of researcher:	Tanyapon Phongphio
Proposed research project:	Teaching Critical Thinking to Thai EFL Students through Argumentation
Proposed funder(s):	N/A
Discussant for the ethics meeting:	Abiodun Oyewole
Names of supervisor:	1. Dr. Talia Isaacs 2. Dr. Helen Woodfield

Has your supervisor seen this submitted draft of your ethics application? Yes

Please include an outline of the project or append a short (1 page) summary:

Educational institutions in Thailand are expected to produce students who are knowledgeable and capable of critical thinking. The aim to cultivate critical thinking skills alongside English communication skills in ELT would be a great challenge for teachers. Among the various curricula of EFL undergraduate programmes offered in Thailand, teaching critical thinking has been mostly limited to EFL reading and writing courses. Therefore, this research study aims at developing the pedagogical techniques to explicitly foster critical thinking that are appropriate to English oral communication classrooms in higher education in Thailand. Incorporating argumentation for teaching of critical thinking skills would appear to be a new pedagogical area in higher education in Thailand. The objectives of this proposed study are to explore what sort of cultures of language learning Thai students are experiencing and how these will influence their capacity in argumentation in an EFL setting, how one might design an intervention to enhance Thai students' reflection on their argumentation skills and to what extent explicit reflection contributes to making Thai students aware of their argumentation skills and their identity a learner. Data will be collected from English-major undergraduates at a university in Thailand. The participants will voluntarily engage in argumentation, one-on-one interviews and questionnaires. The qualitative data will be transcribed, coded, and analysed using thematic analysis. The statistical analysis will be used for the analysis of quantitative data.

Ethical issue discussed and decisions taken (see list of prompts overleaf):

1. Researcher access/exit

This research project will recruit EFL undergraduates from the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities at a Thai university where I work as a full-time lecturer. I would emphasise that my role in this project is not as a lecturer there, but rather as a researcher from the University of Bristol. Before data collection, I will send the faculty a letter together with an information sheet providing an overview of my research to ask for their permission to carry out the research and to confirm that the data can be transferred and processed in Bristol. After obtaining the permission, I will approach my co-workers for permission to

make an announcement in their classes to invite students to voluntarily take part in this project.

2. Information given to participants

An information sheet will be given to each participant. The document will include the name of the researcher and outline the reason for research, including the topic, objectives, methods, and the possible intended uses of the findings from the research. Any ethical issues associated with the research will also be outlined (see below).

3. Inform consent

The consent form will be made available at the end of the information sheet. I will also verbally inform the participants at the beginning that they have the choice to give or not to give their consent, and their participation will not involve any grading in any subjects. If any students refuse to participate in this project at first, they will be encouraged to reconsider. I will let them know that taking part in one-one-one interviews can be flexible depending on their convenient time.

4. Participants right of withdrawal

The information sheet will include information concerning the participants' right of withdrawal. I will also verbally remind them about their right to engage in or withdraw from the investigative process at any time if they have reached the physical or mental state where their participation can no longer be possible for them and for whatever reason they may provide. They will also be informed that if they withdraw from the study, all information provided by them will be removed from and will not be used in this study.

5. Complaints procedure

The information sheet will also include the names of my supervisors. If the department, the participants, or any other stakeholders express some concern about the research, they can voice their complaints to my supervisors.

6. Safety and well-being of participants/ researchers

Data collection involves one-on-one interviews, observation, and think aloud protocols. The aforementioned methods will be carried out at the university during the week within office hours, and occasionally between 5 pm and 7 pm. The channel to contact the participants is via mobile phone, not via any social networking. Personal data such as home address and home phone number will not be provided in the information sheet.

7. Anonymity/confidentiality

It is also mentioned in the information sheet that the data gathered from them will be kept confidential and anonymous and will not be distributed in any way. Pseudonyms and id numbers that cannot be traced will be used in data storage, transcribing, analysis and report. If any of the participants insist on revealing their names in the research, the agreement needs to be signed to make sure that it is their own desire and decision not to be anonymous in this

study. In additions, the name of the university where the data collection has been carried out will be anonymous.

8. Data collection

The information sheet provides the participants the information about the methods used for data collection. Before the data collection process, I will give the participants a brief overview of the methods and procedures they will be engaged in. Further, I will assure the participants that the information they give will not be shared with other staff and teachers at the department.

9. Data analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative will be analysed with the assurance that the identity of the participants will be protected.

10. Data storage

Both qualitative and quantitative data will be stored on the password protected computers. No data will be stored on any flash drives or any other device.

11. Data Protection Act

I will ensure that the data will be stored safely and will be used for the purposes of this research only, not be distributed in any way without prior permission.

12. Feedback

For transparency, I will list the key points from the qualitative data collected from one-on-one interviews. After that, I will let the participants review them to make sure all the points they have made are what they really mean.

13. Responsibilities to colleagues/academic community

I will ensure that the process of data collection in my study will not cause my colleagues any concern neither affecting the participants' class attendance nor disrupting classroom instruction.

14. Reporting of research

I will report the findings from the research study because it is part of what I am investigating and I believe that it will be useful for further studies and lead to the improvement in the future. Additionally, the participants will be informed that the findings from the present investigation will be further presented in a seminar or a conference and published in an academic journal.

If you feel you need to discuss any issue further, or to highlight difficulties, please contact the GSoE's ethics co-ordinators who will suggest possible ways forward.

Signed: Tanyapon Phongphio (Researcher) Signed: Abiodun Oyewole (Discussant)

Date: 4 November 2015

Appendix 6

Interview questions for RQ1

No.	Questions	Rationale
1	Why did you volunteer in this research project?	To explore the motivations of the participants in this research study
2	You know that you are required to perform debate. What were you thinking about it?	To explore their understanding of the concept of argumentation
3	What were you thinking when being randomly paired with other students?	To investigate to what extent relationship with peers plays a role in the participants' willingness to cooperate in debate
4	How well do you think you comprehended the video clips?	To encourage the participants to reflect on their own listening skills and the listening materials
5	How well do you think you captured the arguments of the speakers?	To encourage the participants to reflect on their own skills in analysis of arguments
6	How well do you think you performed making a refutation?	To encourage the participants to reflect on their own performance when making refutation
7	What were you thinking when being assigned to the proposition or opposition speaker?	To investigate to what extent their beliefs have an impact on their performance in debate
8	How well do you think you performed debate?	To encourage the participants to reflect on their own performance in debate
9	What were you thinking when opposing your friend's arguments?	To uncover the participants' perceptions on challenging others' arguments
10	What were you thinking when your friend attacked your arguments?	To uncover the participants' perceptions on being challenged by their interlocutors
11	What do you like about the debate?	To explore the participants' positive attitudes towards their direct experience in debate
12	What do you dislike about the debate?	To explore the participants' negative attitudes about their direct experience in debate
13	What do you think you have learned from performing debate?	To encourage the participants to reflect on their direct involvement in debate
14	In your opinion, what environment should be suitable for you to perform the debate?	To explore what kind of environment or setting would be appropriate for motivating the participants to take part in debate
15	How much would you like to engage in debate or a debate-like activity again in the future?	To explore the factors that can influence or hinder the participants' decision to join debate or any debate-like activity again in the future
16	What do you think learning English communication classes would be like if debate or a debate-like activity were implemented?	To explore the participants opinions and suggestions about the ways in which debate could possibly be carried out in an EFL speaking classrooms

Appendix 7

University of BRISTOL

Questionnaire

The Ability of Thai EFL Students to Construct Arguments in Debate

Please take a moment to complete this questionnaire to let us know your opinions. What you have to say is important to us. Your response will be strictly confidential and only be used for research purposes. If you have any questions regarding the survey, please feel free to contact me via Email: tp14113@bristol.ac.uk.

For each of the following statements, please check ✓ in the box that corresponds with your experience or true feelings.

1. Have you ever participated in any debate or debate-like activity in English?
ท่านเคยเข้าร่วมกิจกรรมที่มีลักษณะโต้วาทีโดยใช้ภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่

☐ Never. ไม่เคย

☐ Yes. เคย (***Please go to items 1.1*** หากเลือกคำตอบข้อนี้กรุณาตอบคำถามข้อ 1.1)

1.1 When was the last time that you participated? ท่านได้เข้าร่วมกิจกรรมดังกล่าวครั้งสุดท้ายคือที่ไหนและเมื่อใด

_____

		1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mid	4 High	5 Very High
2	How would you rate your ability to comprehend the presentations in the video clips? ความสามารถของท่านในการฟังการอภิปรายในวีดีโอคลิปอยู่ในระดับใด					
3	How would you rate your ability to identify Tufecki's and Graham's arguments? ความสามารถของท่านในการหาประเด็นที่ Tufecki และ Graham ได้หยิบยกขึ้นมาอภิปรายอยู่ในระดับใด					
4	How would you rate your ability to identify weak points of Tufecki's and Graham's arguments? ความสามารถของท่านในการหาจุดอ่อนของประเด็นที่ Tufecki และ Graham ได้หยิบยกขึ้นมาอภิปรายอยู่ในระดับใด					
5	How would you rate your ability to oppose Tufecki's and Graham's positions? ความสามารถของท่านในการโต้แย้งประเด็นที่ Tufecki และ Graham ได้หยิบยกขึ้นมาอภิปรายอยู่ในระดับใด					

		1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mid	4 High	5 Very High
6	What is your level of confidence to carry out debate? ความมั่นใจของท่านในการโต้วาทีอยู่ในระดับใด					
7	What is your level of anxiety to carry out the debate? ความวิตกกังวลของท่านในการโต้วาทีอยู่ในระดับใด					
8	How important is the topic being discussed in debate? หัวข้อสำหรับการโต้วาทีมีอิทธิพลต่อความสามารถของท่านในการโต้วาทีมากหรือน้อยเพียงใด					
9	How motivating is the debate? การโต้วาทีทำให้ท่านต้องการเข้าร่วมมากหรือน้อยเพียงใด					
10	How much does your prior learning experience provide the necessary skills/strategies to carry out debate? ประสบการณ์จากการเรียนที่ผ่านๆมาทำให้ท่านมีทักษะหรือกลยุทธ์ที่จำเป็นต่อการโต้วาทีมากหรือน้อยเพียงใด					
11	How would you rate your ability to construct arguments in debate? ความสามารถของท่านในการหยิบยกประเด็นในการโต้วาทีนี้อยู่ในระดับใด					
12	How would you rate your ability to identify weak points of your friend's arguments in the debate? ความสามารถของท่านในการหาจุดอ่อนของประเด็นที่ฝ่ายตรงข้ามได้นำเสนอในการโต้วาทีอยู่ในระดับใด					
13	How would you rate your ability to rebut the points made by your friend in debate? ความสามารถของท่านในการโต้แย้งประเด็นที่ฝ่ายตรงข้ามได้นำเสนอในการโต้วาทีนี้อยู่ในระดับใด					
14	How would you rate your English listening skills in performing debate? ทักษะการฟังภาษาอังกฤษของท่านเพื่อการโต้วาทีนี้อยู่ในระดับใด					
15	How would you rate your English speaking skills in performing debate? ทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของท่านเพื่อการโต้วาทีนี้อยู่ในระดับใด					
15	How would you rate your English vocabulary size in performing debate? จำนวนคำศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษที่ท่านทราบเพื่อการโต้วาทีอยู่ในระดับใด					

		1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mid	4 High	5 Very High
16	How would you rate the level of your English accuracy when performing debate? ความถูกต้องในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของท่านในการโต้วาทีอยู่ในระดับใด					
18	How would you rate the level of your English fluency when performing debate? ความคล่องในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของท่านในการโต้วาทีอยู่ในระดับใด					

Other suggestions:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for completing our questionnaire. ☺

Appendix 8

Thematic analysis: From coding to developing themes

Interview extract	Codes	Collated codes	Sub-themes	Themes
I didn't have the confidence at first, but now others believed in me. I decided I could no longer be afraid. At the end of the day there are much scarier things awaiting me. So, I decided to make an appearance because at the very least it would be beneficial as well as a good experience. I think it's time for self-development (laughs) if not a lot, then a little. I also wanted to defeat my own personal demons…	Lack of self-confidence Attempt to perform to meet others' expectations Worries over challenges Gain experience Self-development Overcome weaknesses	Anxiety over one's own abilities Anxiety over performativity Drives for participation	Debilitating anxiety Facilitating anxiety Facilitating anxiety	Anxiety
Fear. I'm afraid if I attended and didn't succeed, I'd feel terrible. When you're down, you don't have the motivation to do anything. I didn't want to have those kinds of feelings, so I declined opportunities in many different places...	Fear of failure Fear of disappointment	Anxiety over one's own achievement	Debilitating anxiety	
A native English-speaking teacher would surely ask difficult questions. The teacher'd have high expectations for me, right? Kaarina continued to say I should go, which got me thinking she sees some potential in me whereas I didn't recognise my abilities. This wasn't evident at first, yet I decided to show up and prove my capabilities anyway.	Attempt to perform to meet others' expectations Lack of self-confidence Prove oneself	Anxiety over performativity Anxiety over one's own ability Drives for participation	Facilitating anxiety Debilitating anxiety Facilitating anxiety	

Appendix 9

Task 1: Brainstorming

Rationale: Brainstorming was included to provide a quick means for accessing the students' ideas about the topic of discussion.

Objective: I wanted the students to be able to handle the conversational input taking place during brainstorming and to contribute to the small group interaction by articulating their thoughts relevant to the topic 'social media applications' in the English language.

Time Required: The brainstorming could be done between two and three minutes because it is the pre-task phase and should be the shortest stage in the iteration. The brainstorming required the students to share ideas rather than arriving at a solution to the problem.

Activity: Encourage the students to share ideas about social media applications by asking the following six questions.

1) What are the social media applications or websites that people use frequently nowadays?
2) Why are they popular among users?
3) What social media applications have you used?
4) What are the purposes of using those applications?
5) What are the benefits of using social media applications?
6) What could be the drawback of relying so much on social media applications?

Appendix 10

Task 2: Exposure to the structure of major claim and arguments

Rationale: This task was designed to provide the students with assistance in analysing how the speakers in the video clips structured and presented their claims and arguments.

Objective: I wanted the students to be able to recognise and identify the elements involved in constructing a major claim and an argument from two excerpts of video clips about the benefits and disadvantages of social media applications.

Time Required: Task 2 could be completed in 25 minutes because this pre-task incorporated visual media and activities to set a scene for the topic of social media applications. The task also actively required the students' involvement in collaboratively co-constructing knowledge about the patterns associated with a major claim and an argument.

Resources: Video clips and worksheet

Activity:

Step 1*:* Provide the students with an overview of what they are required to do in the task by informing them that they are going to watch two extracted video clips of the talks in TED conferences. Both video clips provide English subtitles and will be played twice.

Step 2: Before playing the video clip, provide the students with the worksheet and draw their attention to the information provided on the worksheet such as the instructions, the titles of the excerpts and the questions. At this stage, the students should be informed about what they are required to do in the task. A discussion on the titles before watching the excerpts will facilitate a prediction of the possible content of the talks. Clarification of the questions will also guide the students to the elements they should focus on while watching.

Step 3: Introduce the first video clip 'Online Social Change: Easy to Organise, Hard to Win' by Zeynep Tufekci (2016) which lasts 4:05 minutes. Then encourage the students to share their expectations about the title and the content of the talk. Clarify the terms such as 'main theme' and 'evidence' in the following questions.

1) What is the main theme of Tufekci's presentation?
2) What are the reasons Tufekci used to support and explain why she is right?
3) How did Tufekci support her reasons?

Step 4: Have the students watch the first extract together twice.

Step 5: Give the students two minutes to prepare for their answers. Then discuss the answers with them.

Step 6: Introduce the second video clip 'How Social Media Makes Us Unsocial' by Allison Graham (2014) which lasts, approximately, 2:30 minutes. Encourage them to share their expectations about the title and content of the talk. Draw their attention to the questions which are the same as those used for the first video clip.

Step 7: Have the students watch the second extract together twice.

Step 8: Give the students two minutes to prepare for their answers. Next, discuss the answers with them.

Step 9: Encourage the students to think about the structure of a claim and an argument and discuss. This is the way to explicitly provide knowledge about the argument pattern, which is necessary for their performance in Task 3 and Task 4. Discussion is aimed at encouraging the students to inductively conceptualise the structure of a claim and an argument, which have been implicitly presented in the talks.

Worksheet

I. Watch the *TED* video clip "Online Social Change: Easy to Organise, Hard to Win" by Zeynep Tufecki (4:05 minutes). Then answer the following questions.

1.1 What is the main theme of Tufecki's presentation?

_____

_____

1.2 What are the reasons Tufecki used to support and explain why she is right?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

1.3 How did Tufecki support her reasons?

_____

_____

_____

Online Social Change: Easy to Organise, Hard to Win. (2016) [Online]. Available from: https://www.ted.com/talks/zeynep_tufekci_how_the_internet_has_made_social_change_easy_to_organize_hard_to_win?language [Accessed 29 June 2016].

II. Watch the *TED×SMU* Video clip "How Social Media Makes Us Unsocial" by Allison Graham (2:30 minutes). Then answer the following questions.

2.1 What is the main theme of Graham's presentation?

_____

_____

2.2 What are the reasons Graham used to support and explain why she is right?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2.3 How did Graham support her reasons?

_____

_____

_____

How Social Media Makes Us Unsocial. (2014) [Online]. Available from: www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5GecYjy9-Q&index=7&list=PLauj1kNn7iCyWhBcUz06At5IWGNZV6JPr [Accessed 29 June 2016].

Appendix 11

Task 3: Making refutation

Rationale: This task was developed to introduce the students to the concept of refutation which.is one of the important components to the process of argumentation. It is essential to point out to the students that they can logically challenge the interlocutors' standpoints, and vice versa.

Objective: I wanted the students to be able to demonstrate their understanding about refutation by employing their knowledge of the structure of a major claim and an argument when refuting other people's arguments.

Duration: Task 3 could last, approximately, between 15 and 20 minutes. The first two minutes were given for introducing the concept of refutation. Nine-minute preparation time was allocated for each student to work on the content necessary for refuting three argument items. After that, six minutes were allocated for six sessions of refutation.

Activity:

Step 1: Inform the students that they are going to refute the arguments addressed by the speakers in the video clips in Task 2. Instead of immediately directing the students to make refutation, give them an overview of the task they are going to perform. This step will help ensure that the students understand the goal and instructions of the task.

Step 2: Clarify the term 'refute'. Thai students are likely to have little or no direct experience of debate and consequently a lack of knowledge about the process of refutation. Therefore, it is vital to ensure that they understand the concept of refutation before having them perform the task.

Step 3: Provide each student with three-minute preparation time for his or her own one-minute refutation. Also, allow them to search for information from any sources, including the internet.

Step 4: Have each student make refutation.

Appendix 12

Task 4: Debate

Rationale: The task was intended to provide the students with the context in which they constructed and logically addressed their arguments in favour of or against the resolution of the controversial topic and refute the interlocutor's standpoints with legitimate reasons.

Objective I wanted the students to be able to employ their knowledge about the structure of a claim and an argument and the skills in making refutation in performing debate in English in the topic: Do the benefits of social media applications outweigh the disadvantages?

Time Required: Time provided for Task 4 was 75 minutes. The first 10 minutes were allocated for an introductory session which involved an explanation of the format and the different roles of the speakers in different sessions. Next, 30 minutes were given for the students to prepare for debate content. Another 30 minutes were allocated for six sessions of the talks – 5 minutes for each session. The last 5 minutes were spared for any possible interruption which occurred during debate or the gap between the sessions.

Resources: Handout 'Debate Activity'

Activity:

Step 1: Inform the students that they are going to perform debate in English. Presenting the objective of the task will not only provide them with ideas of what they are required to do and the nature of the outcomes they will produce, but also it will be the way to generate the students' interests and motivation in the task.

Step 2: Provide the students with the handout. Draw their attention to the topic for debate 'Do the benefits of social media applications/websites outweigh the disadvantages?' and clarify it. Rather than assuming that the students could understand this debate topic, they should be probed about their understanding.

Anything with regard to the topic which is confusing to them should be clarified beforehand.

Step 3: Explain the debate format and the roles of the speakers in each session. Presenting the format of debate will help to inform the students that each session served different purposes. Identifying the roles of the speakers in each session will give the students helpful guidance about what they are required to do to arrive at the objective of each session.

Step 4: Clarify the term 'rebuttal'. Introduction of the concept of rebuttal should be carried out prior to having the students perform debate. According to the debate format, the speakers will be required to not only advance their major claims and arguments but also respond to opposing arguments in Sessions 5 and 6. Making rebuttal is a significant process to allow the speakers to defend their arguments being attacked by the opposite speaker.

Step 5: Have the students choose the side they want to work on - proposition or opposition. Offering the students the option to choose the side they prefer or feel comfortable to work on is a way to treat them in a cooperative manner. Negotiation should also be carried out if both choose the same sides. Directly assigning the students to the proposition or opposition speakers without giving them an option to make their own decision will negate a positive atmosphere and decrease their motivation for the task.

Step 6*:* Inform the participants that they have a 30-minute preparation time and that they are allowed to search for information from any sources.

Step 7: Carry out debate and have the student follow the format presented in the handout.

Debate Activity
กิจกรรมโต้วาที

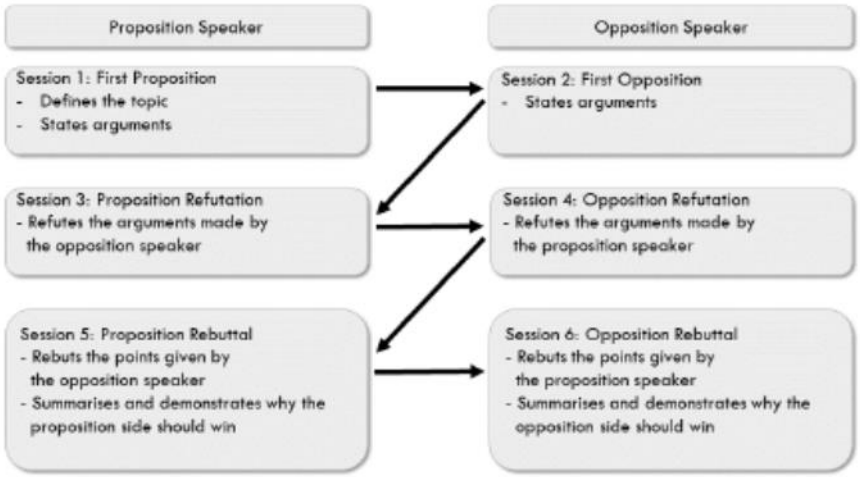
Topic: Do the benefits of social media applications/websites outweigh the disadvantages?

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

In completing this task, you will be involved in debate. In pairs, one of you will be assigned to a proposition position, the other will be assigned to the opposition position. Each speaker constructs arguments for and against issues relevant to the topic. The proposition and the opposition speakers will have an equal amount of time and equal opportunities to present their arguments, refute the points made by the opponent, and defend their claims and arguments.

สำหรับกิจกรรมโต้วาทีนี้ ในจำนวนผู้อภิปราย 2 คน ผู้อภิปรายคนหนึ่งจะเป็นฝ่ายเสนอและอีกคนหนึ่งจะเป็นฝ่ายค้าน แต่ละคนจะอภิปรายเพื่อสนับสนุนหรือคัดค้านในประเด็นตามญัตติหรือหัวข้อการอภิปราย ผู้อภิปรายจะมีเวลาในการเตรียมตัวเท่ากัน รวมทั้งมีโอกาสเท่าเทียมกันในการนำเสนอประเด็น คัดค้านประเด็นของผู้อภิปรายฝ่ายตรงข้าม และโต้แย้งเพื่อปกป้องประเด็นที่ตนเองได้นำเสนอ

Debate Format



Each session lasts 5 minutes.

Roles of Speakers

Session 1: First Proposition

In the first proposition stage, the proposition speaker is expected to define the discussion topic and the case and deliver the complete set of arguments in favour of his or her resolution.

ในรอบแรกฝ่ายเสนอจะต้องให้คำจำกัดความตามญัตติการโต้วาที กำหนดบริบทหรือกรณีตัวอย่าง พร้อมทั้งหยิบยกประเด็นต่างๆขึ้นมาเพื่อสนับสนุนความคิดของตนเอง

Session 2: First Opposition

During his or her turn to speak, the opposition speaker is required to challenge the position of the proposition speaker by delivering a counterclaim and counterarguments.
ในรอบนี้ฝ่ายค้านจะท้าทายฝ่ายเสนอโดยนำเสนอประเด็นเพื่อค้านญัตติในการโต้วาที

Session 3: Proposition Refutation

In the proposition refutation stage the proposition speaker has two tasks to accomplish during his or her turn to speak. First, the speaker outlines the arguments made by the opposition speaker. Next, he or she is expected to attack the arguments raised by the opposition speaker. If the proposition speaker does not make any refutation, this indicates that the opposition speaker's arguments are acceptable.
ในรอบนี้ฝ่ายเสนอจะสรุปประเด็นที่ฝ่ายค้านได้นำเสนอไปแล้วและโต้แย้งประเด็นเหล่านั้น หากฝ่ายเสนอไม่โต้แย้งนั่นหมายความว่าฝ่ายเสนอเห็นด้วยกับฝ่ายค้าน

Session 4: Opposition Refutation

In the opposition refutation stage, the opposition speaker is required to perform the same task as the proposition speaker is required to do in Session 3. The opposition speaker is required to attack the arguments raised by the proposition speaker.
ในรอบนี้ฝ่ายค้านจะทำเช่นเดียวกับที่ฝ่ายเสนอได้ทำในรอบที่ 3 โดยฝ่ายค้านจะสรุปประเด็นของฝ่ายเสนอและโต้แย้งประเด็นเหล่านั้น

Session 5: Proposition Rebuttal

The task of the proposition speaker in this session is to defend his or her arguments against the refutation made by the opposition speaker and to highlight weaknesses exposed during the opposition refutation. The speaker is also required to summarise and demonstrate why the proposition side should prevail.
ในรอบนี้ฝ่ายเสนอมีโอกาสที่จะโต้แย้งในประเด็นต่างๆที่ฝ่ายค้านโจมตีมา โดยชี้ให้เห็นจุดอ่อนของประเด็นเหล่านั้น นอกจากนี้ฝ่ายเสนอจะสรุปและชี้ให้เห็นว่าเหตุใดประเด็นของฝ่ายเสนอจึงน่าเชื่อถือกว่าของฝ่ายค้านในญัตตินี้

Session 6: Opposition Rebuttal

The opposition speaker performs a similar task as the proposition speaker is expected to do in Session 5 by rebutting any and all given points in the proposition case. However, any new arguments introduced in this stage will be ignored as it is considered unfair for the proposition speaker who is not given an opportunity to respond.
ในรอบนี้ฝ่ายค้านจะทำเช่นเดียวกับที่ฝ่ายเสนอได้ทำในรอบที่ 5 โดยการโต้แย้งประเด็นที่ฝ่ายเสนอโจมตีมา อย่างไรก็ตามฝ่ายค้านไม่ควรหยิบยกประเด็นใหม่ขึ้นมาเพิ่มเติมในรอบนี้เพราะเป็นการไม่ยุติธรรมสำหรับฝ่ายเสนอที่ไม่มีโอกาสโต้แย้งประเด็นใหม่นั้นได้

Appendix 13

Modified worksheet of Task 2

Worksheet

I. Watch the *TED* video clip "Online Social Change: Easy to Organise, Hard to Win" by Zeynep Tufekci (4:05 minutes). Then answer the following questions.

1.1 What is the major claim of Tufekci's presentation?

_____

_____

1.2 What are the arguments/reasons Tufekci has constructed to explain why her major claim is right?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

1.3 What evidence did Tufekci use to support her arguments/reasons?

_____

_____

_____

Online Social Change: Easy to Organise, Hard to Win. (2016) [Online]. Available from: https://www.ted.com/talks/zeynep_tufekci_how_the_internet_has_made_social_change_easy_to_organize_hard_to_win?language [Accessed 29 June 2016].

II. Watch the *TED×SMU* Video clip "How Social Media Makes Us Unsocial" by Allison Graham (2:55 minutes). Then answer the following questions.

2.1 What is the major claim of Graham's presentation?

_____

_____

2.2 What are the arguments/reasons Graham has constructed to explain why her major claim is right?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2.3 What evidence did Graham use to support her arguments/reasons?

_____

_____

_____

How Social Media Makes Us Unsocial. (2014) [Online]. Available from: www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5GecYjy9-Q&index=7&list=PLauj1kNn7iCyWhBcUz06At5IWGNZV6JPr [Accessed 29 June 2016].

Appendix 14

Curriculum in the academic year 2014
Bachelor of Arts in English as a Foreign Language

Compulsory units

Skills area		Literature area		Linguistics area	
001111	Oral Communication I	001250	Introduction to Literature	001230	Introduction to Language
001112	Oral Communication II	014270	Literary Studies	001231	English Phonetics
001118	Paragraph Writing	001352	Reservoir Literature & Reinterpretation	001234	Introduction to English Phonology & Morphology
001211	Analytical Reading & Summary Writing	001353	Narratives in Prose	001330	English Syntax
001212	Language Consolidation through Translation	001354	Poetry	001381	Reading Media in English
001218	Essay Writing	001355	Drama		
001281	English Language & Cultures				
001314	Presentation Skills in English				
001315	Translation for Communication Breakthrough				
001318	Academic Writing				
001418	Research Methods in English Language & Literature				